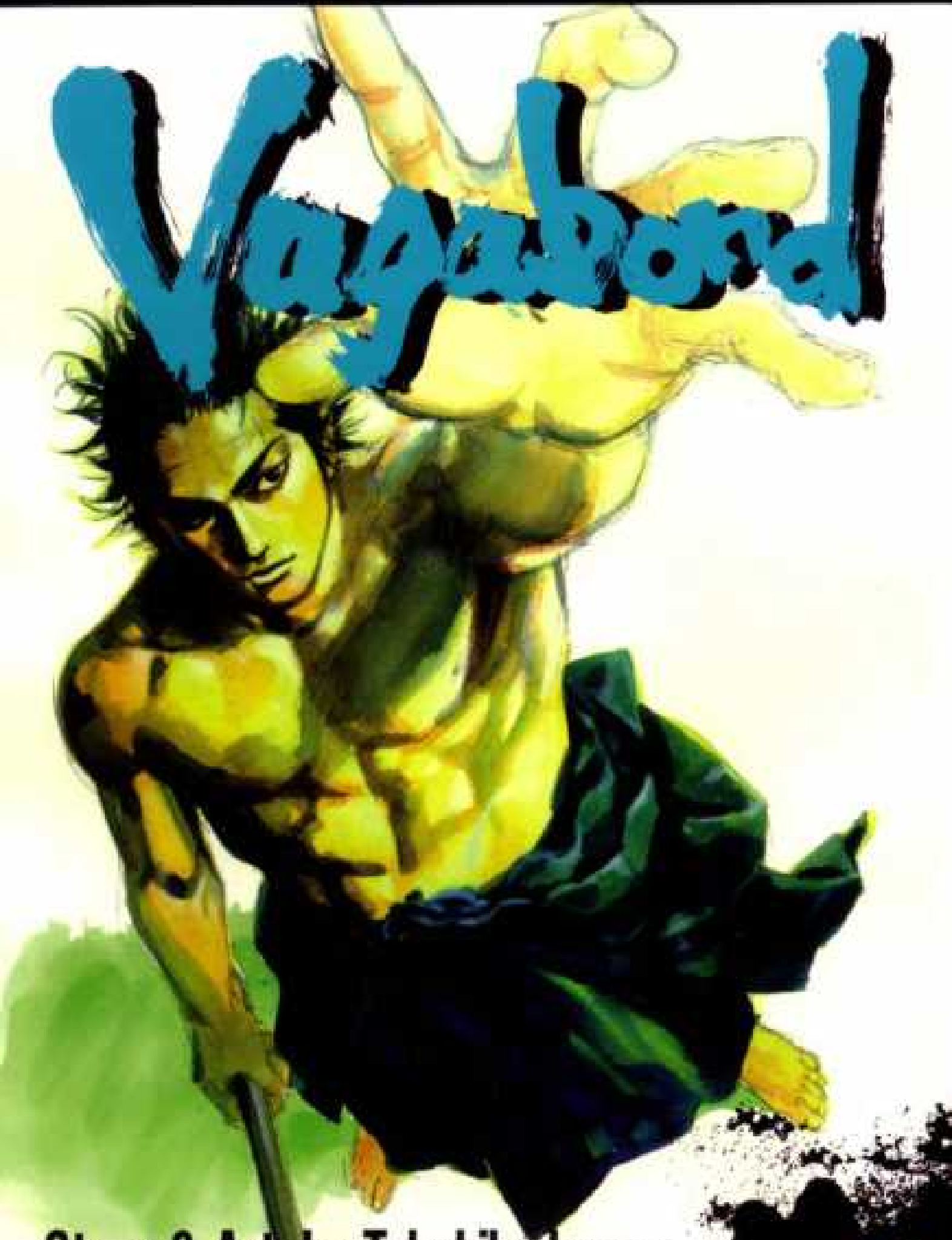
editor's choice

Vagabond



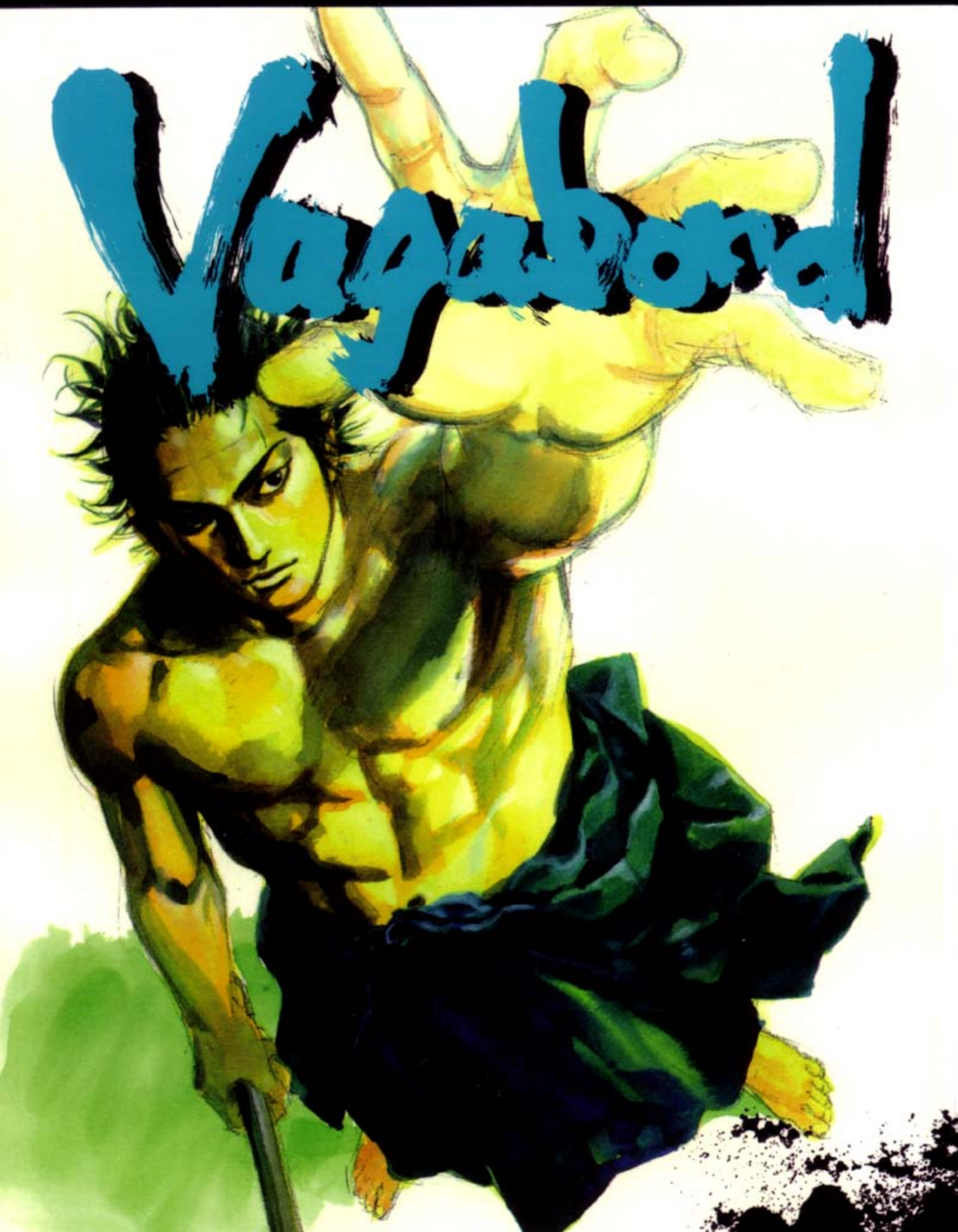
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 6

editor's choice

Vagabond



Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 6

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 6
This graphic novel contains the last half of *VAGABOND* monthly comics #13, and issue #14 and 15 in their entirety.

Story & Art by
Takehiko Inoue
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

English Adaptation by
Yuji Oniki

Touch-up & Lettering/Steve Dutro
Cover & Graphics Design/Izumi Evers
Editor/Andy Nakatani

Managing Editor/Annette Roman
Editor in Chief/William Flanagan
Director of Licensing and Acquisitions/Rika Inouye
Sr. Vice President of Sales and Marketing/Rick Bauer
Sr. Vice President of Editorial/Hyoe Narita
Publisher/Seiji Horibuchi

Vagabond
© 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003 I.T. Planning, Inc.

Originally published in Japan in 2000 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo. English translation rights arranged with I.T. Planning, Inc.

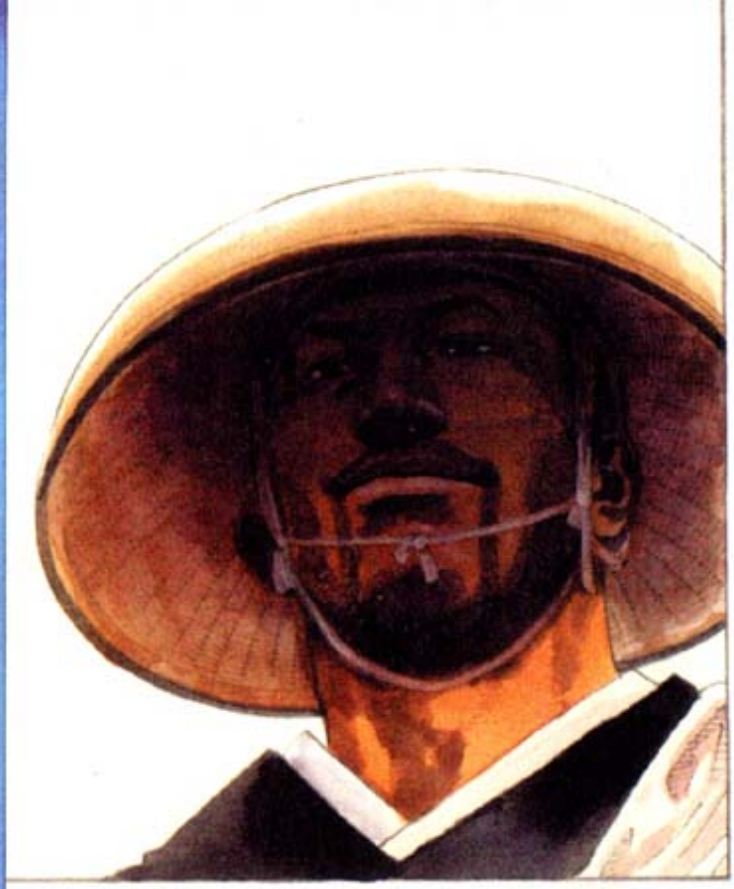
All rights reserved.
No unauthorized reproduction allowed. Although based on historical sources, the stories, characters, and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional.

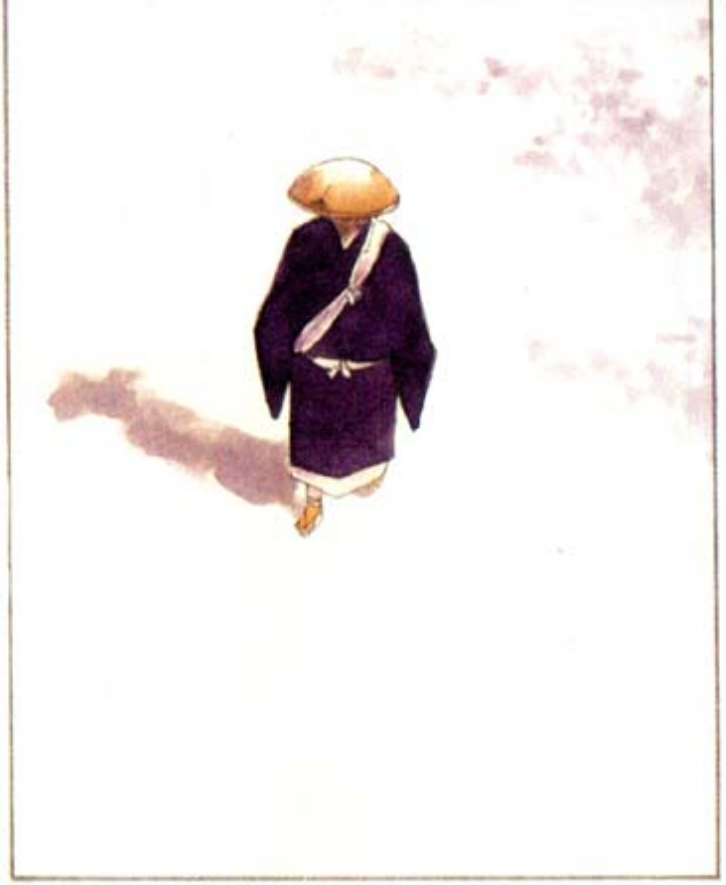
Printed in Canada.

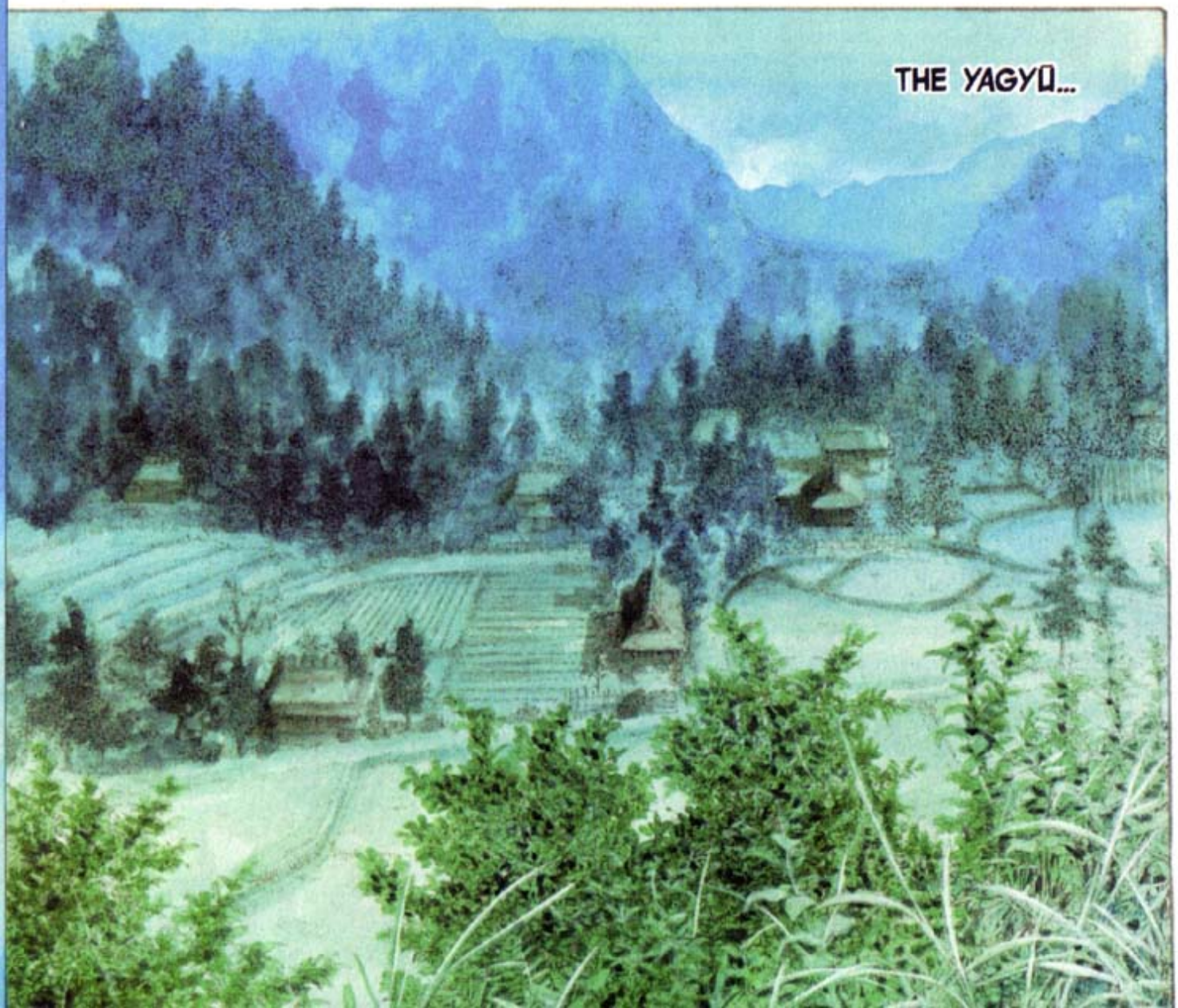
Published by VIZ, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, June 2003

*Vi*sit www.viz.com, store.viz.com,
www.pulp-mag.com, www.animerica-mag.com.

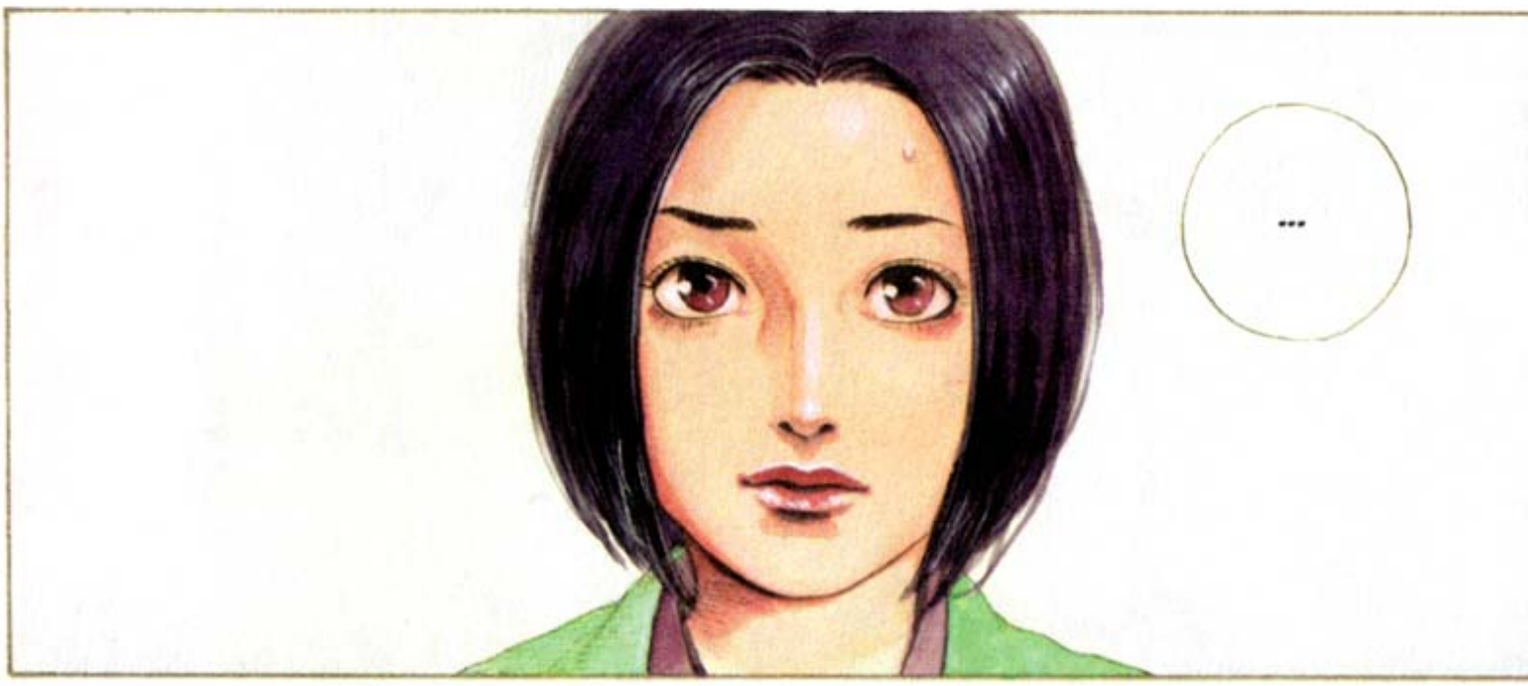





THE YAGYŪ...

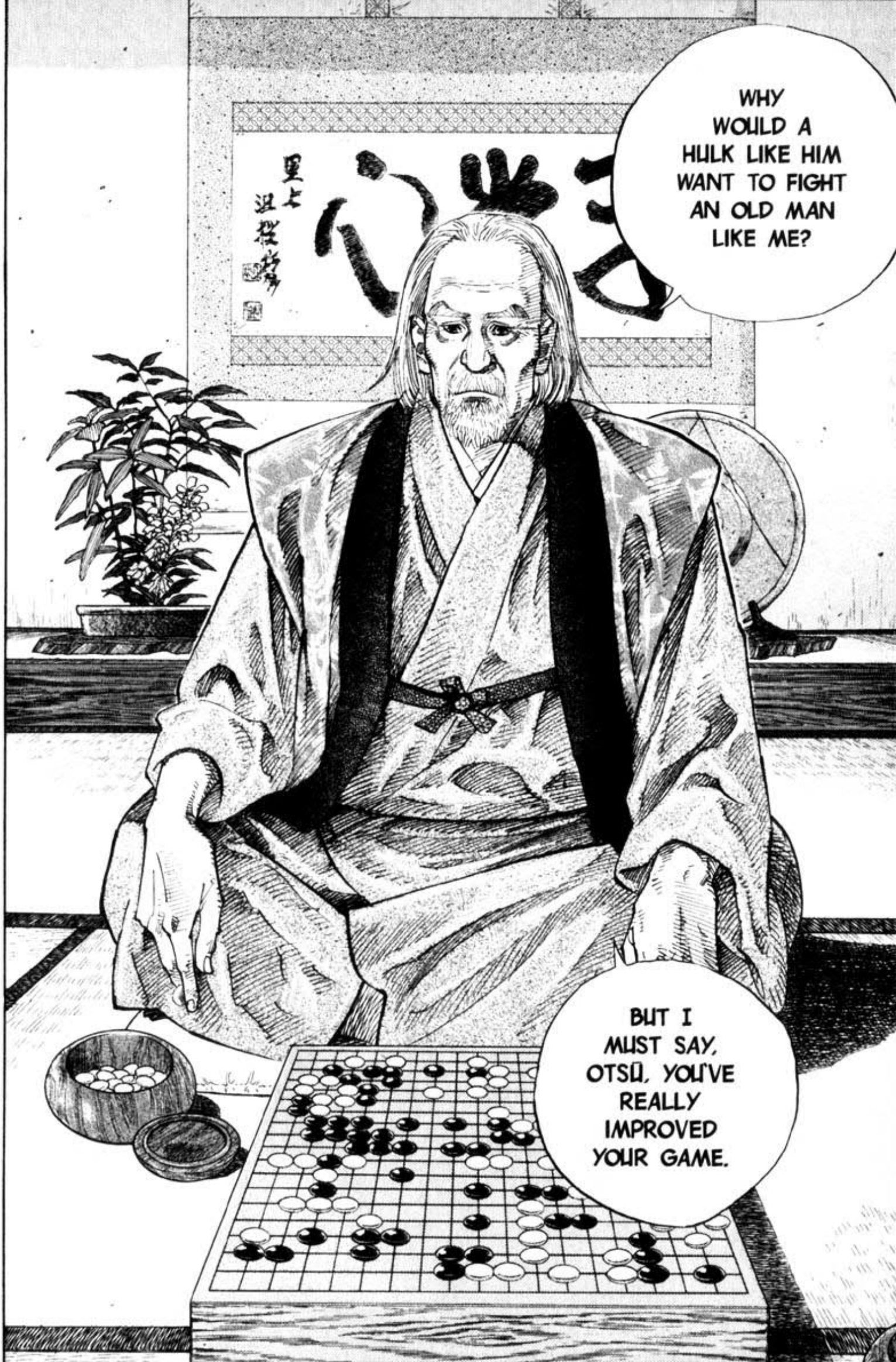
#50 Surviving
Vagabond
vol. 6
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

I AM YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ, THE YOUNGEST SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ OF THE EIGHT KYOTO STYLES.
I SEEK A LESSON FROM MASTER YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI.


...

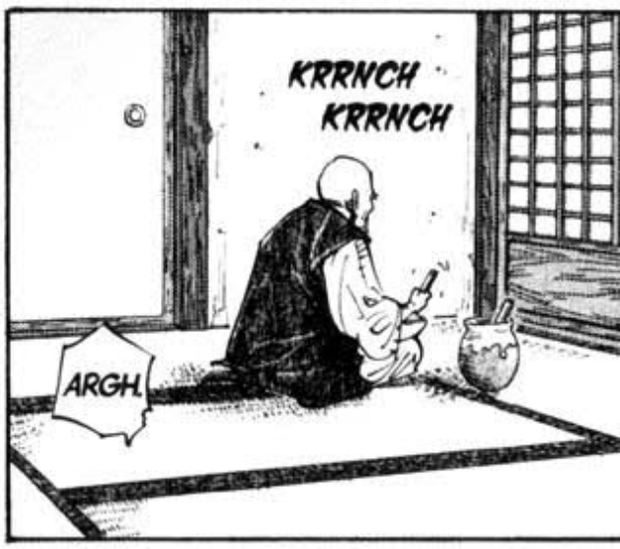
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.

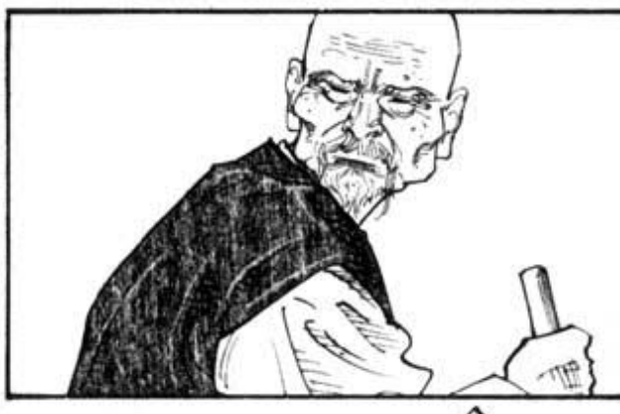
SO YOSHIOKA'S SON IS STILL HERE?
...
YES...


WHY WOULD A HULK LIKE HIM WANT TO FIGHT AN OLD MAN LIKE ME?
BUT I MUST SAY, OTSŪ, YOU'VE REALLY IMPROVED YOUR GAME.

SMIRK
GASP!
KLIK
...
HEY!
FWOOP
YOU'RE SO CHILDISH!!
LOSER?
?
OOPS.
YOU'RE SUCH A SORE LOSER!!

HUF.
UNGH...
THUMP
THMP
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
THUMP
THMP
HUF.
URGH...


KRRNCH
KRRNCH
ARGH.



URGH.
HUF.
HUF.

THUMP
THMP
NNGH...
NNGH...
THUMP
THMP
HUF.
HUF.
THUMP
THMP
AARGH...
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

!!

HUF.
HUF.
...
HUF.
HUF.

MAYBE HE WAS THERE...

HOW DID I END UP HERE...?
WHERE'S JOTARO ...?
HE FOLLOWED YOU TO THE DUEL AND HASN'T BEEN BACK SINCE.

I CAN ONLY REMEMBER FRAGMENTS...
...OF THE FIGHT.

HOW DID I SURVIVE...?
WHAT HAPPENED...?

ZZZ

THANK YOU, MUSASHI...
...FOR TEACHING ME ABOUT LIFE...

!!

JŌTA...
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

HUF.
HUF.
HUFF.
HUFF.

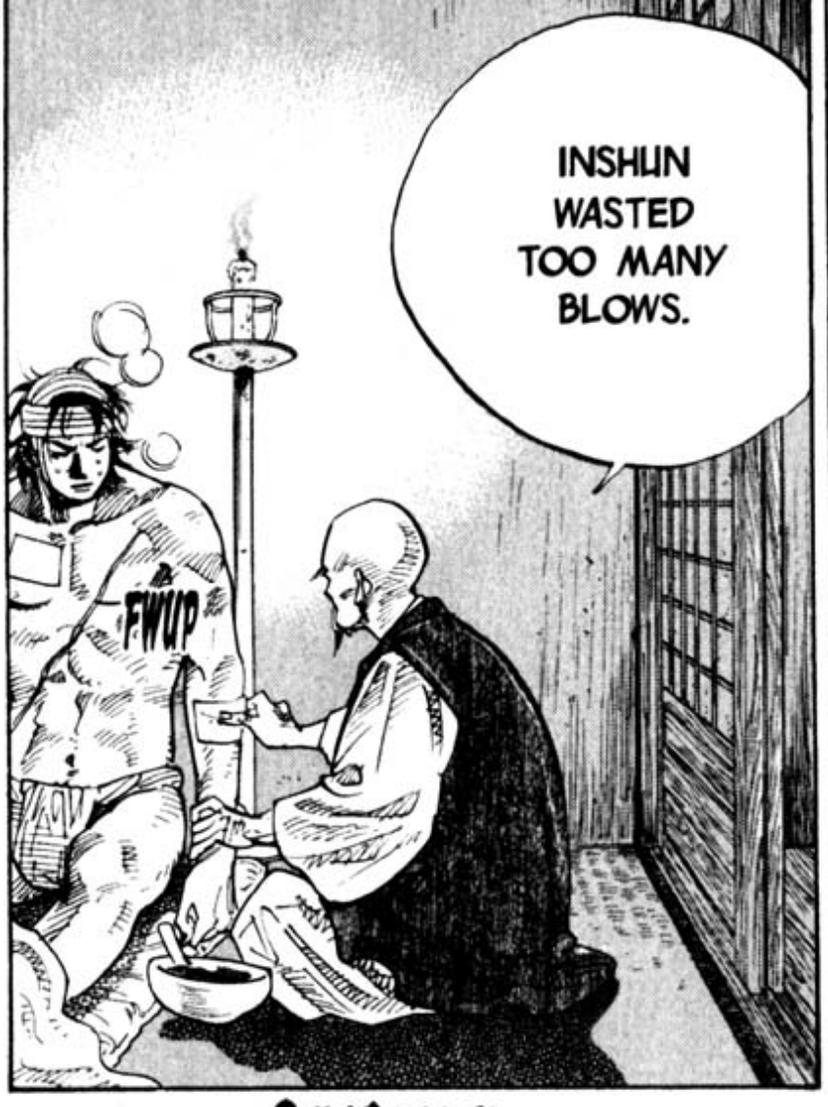
FORTUNATELY, YOU SURVIVED...
WELL...
...MAYBE IT WASN'T SO FORTUNATE.
...NO...
MY APPRENTICESHIP TO YOU WAS BRIEF...
...MASTER...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
I DON'T WANT TO LEARN FROM YOU ANYMORE...
I DON'T NEED TO LEARN HOW TO RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT.

THUMP
THMP
HUF.
THUMP
THMP
HUF.
HUF.
THUMP
THMP
HUF.
HUF.
AARGH!

KLAK
THWUNK!
NNGH!
KOF.
HUF.
HUFF.
KRICH
FWISH
YAHH!
HUF.
THUMP THMP
...
HUF.
THUMP THMP
HUF.
ARGH!!

HUF.
HUF.
KRICH
FWICH
ARGH!
YAHH!
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
THOK
FWOOSH
YAHH!
ARGH!
FOOSH
!!

FLINCH
YUCK!
IT'S READY!
SNIF SNIF


INSHUN WASTED TOO MANY BLOWS.
FWUP

FWUP

SHWIP
IF HE HAD TO HIT YOU SO MANY TIMES...
...HE'S STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO.

OLD MAN, ARE YOU--?

FICH FICH

I'M HŌZŌIN IN'EI.

HMM...

I'M
NOTHING.

I AM SO
SMALL.

I AM INVINCIBLE!!
I COULD KILL YOU WITH THIS STICK.
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE AS STRONG AS HŌZŌIN IN'EI?
THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...
I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU.

#51 Lying Low

...
FWSH
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
KTNK
...
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

SNIF
"I AM STRONG."
WAS I JUST FOOLING MYSELF?

MY "STRENGTH"...
WAS IT JUST AN
ILLUSION?

HUF.
HUF.

I
WASN'T
READY
TO DIE.

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
I'M ACTING THE SAME WAY...
...I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM THAT BANDIT.
I HAVEN'T MADE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL.

KRNCH
KRNCH
...

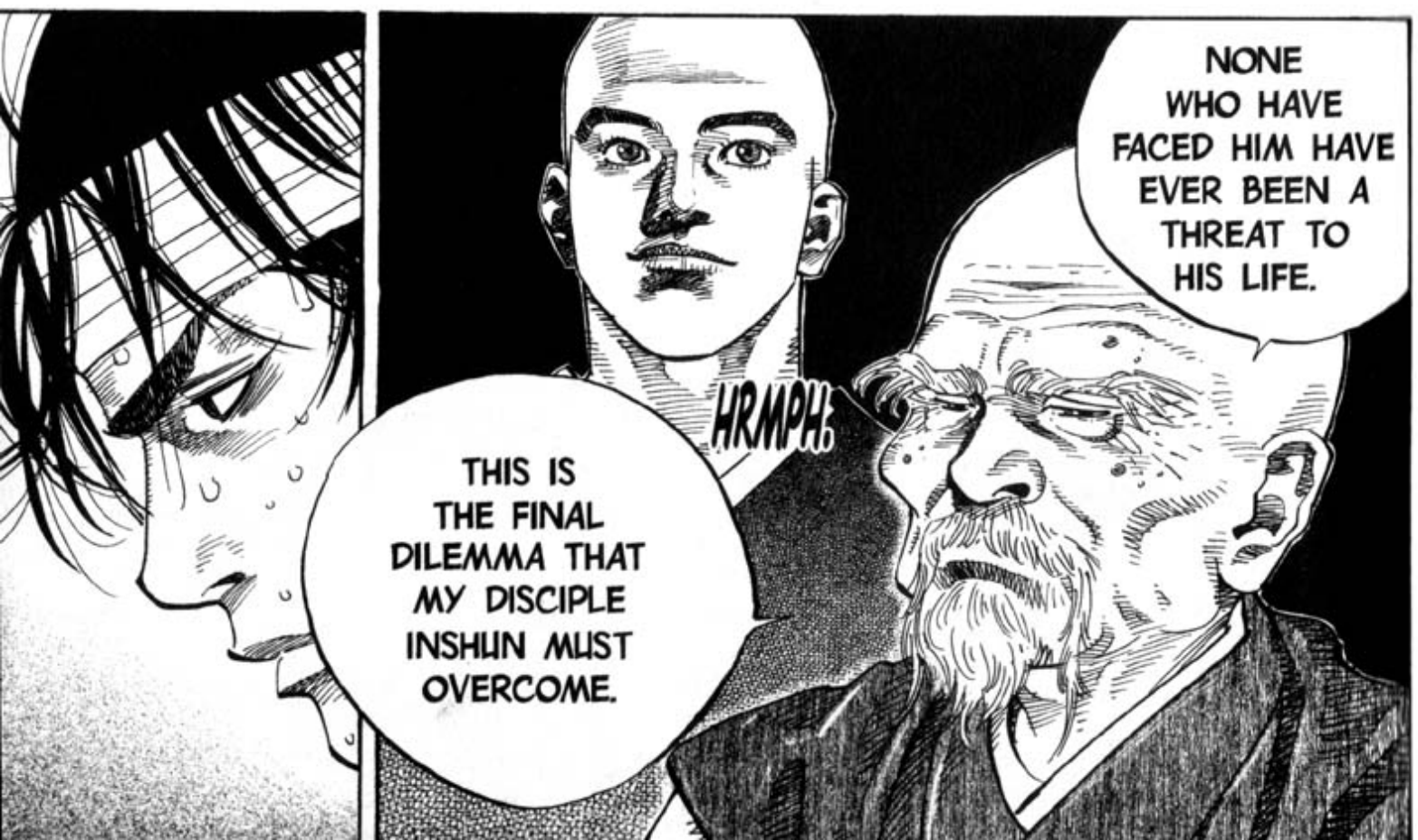
YOU'RE HŌZŌIN IN'EI...
INSHUN'S MASTER.
THEREFORE, I'M YOUR ENEMY...BUT HERE YOU ARE...

EH?
SHWEP

I DON'T GET IT...

HMM...
I WONDER WHETHER ONE COULD EVEN CONSIDER YOU AN ENEMY...
HMPH...
FWUP
HRMPH.

THAT'S TRUE. I DIDN'T EVEN GET ONE BLOW IN.

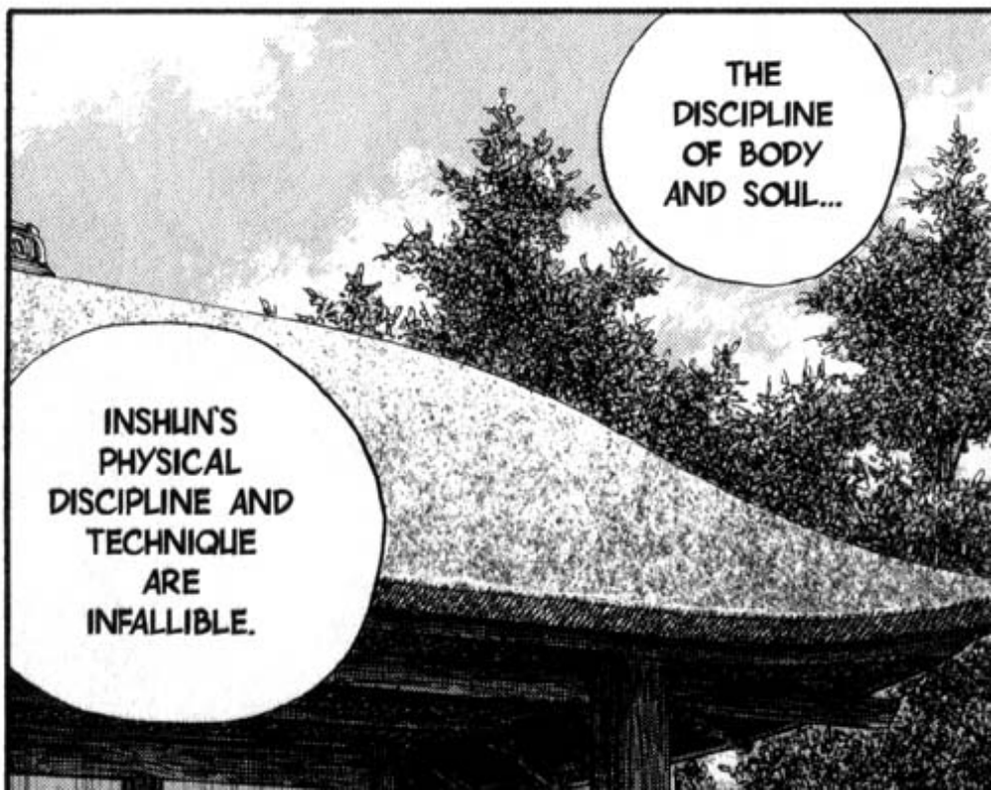

NONE WHO HAVE FACED HIM HAVE EVER BEEN A THREAT TO HIS LIFE.
HRMPH.
THIS IS THE FINAL DILEMMA THAT MY DISCIPLE INSHUN MUST OVERCOME.

HAVING SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS, MUSASHI'S TOUGH BODY RECOVERED QUICKLY.

BUT AS HIS WOUNDS HEALED, HE GREW MORE AND MORE DISAPPOINTED WITH HIMSELF.

HE'S A GENIUS.

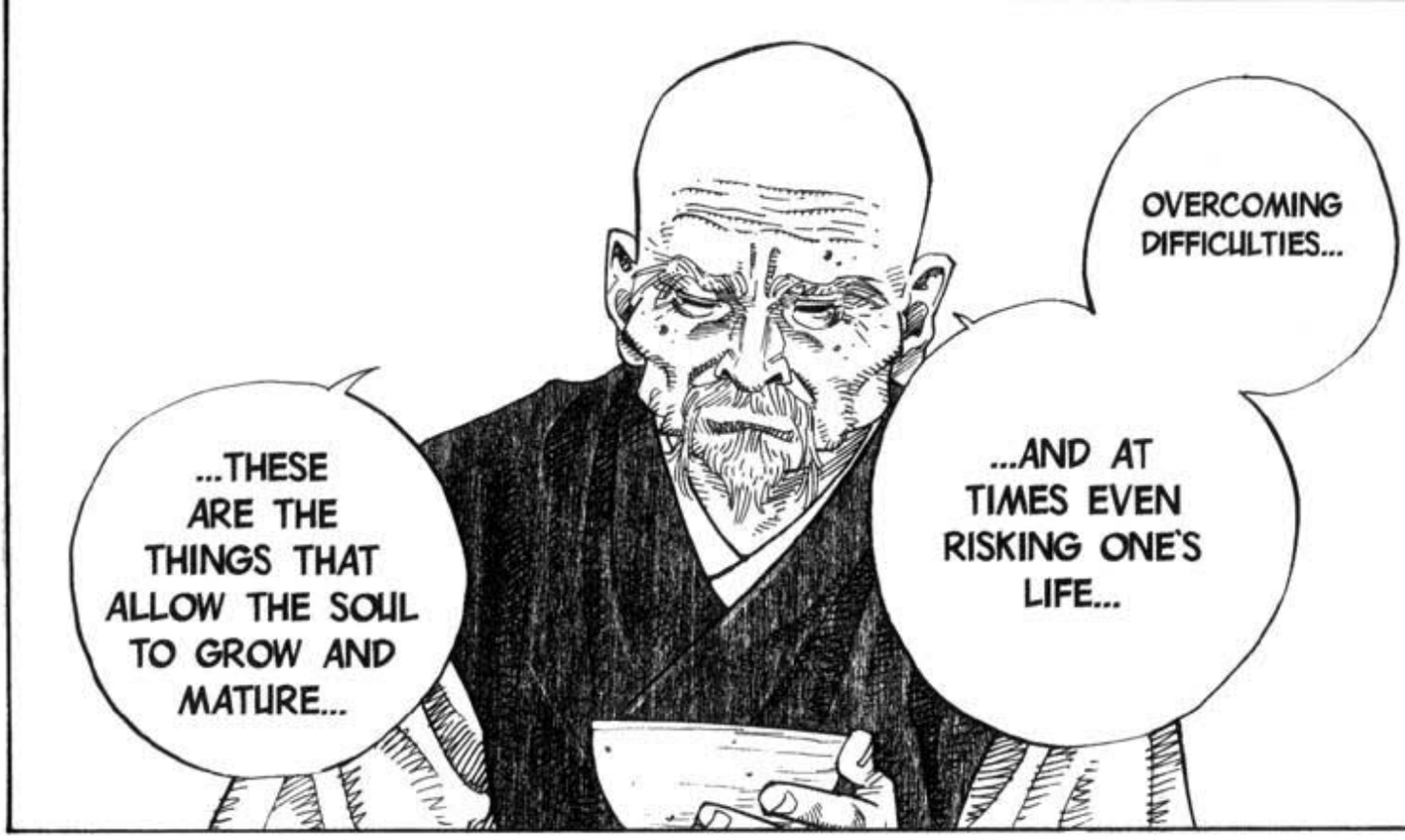
YET, BECAUSE OF THIS...



THE DISCIPLINE OF BODY AND SOUL...

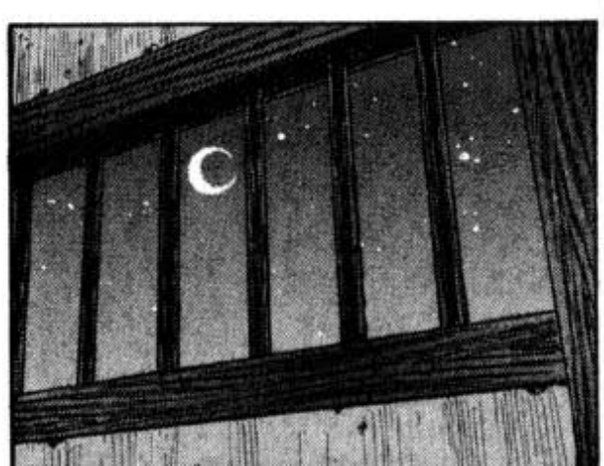
INSHUN'S PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE AND TECHNIQUE ARE INFALLIBLE.

HE KNOWS NOT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SOUL.
...
SHLRP
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH


OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES...
...AND AT TIMES EVEN RISKING ONE'S LIFE...
...THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT ALLOW THE SOUL TO GROW AND MATURE...

KOFF!
HAK!
KOFF!

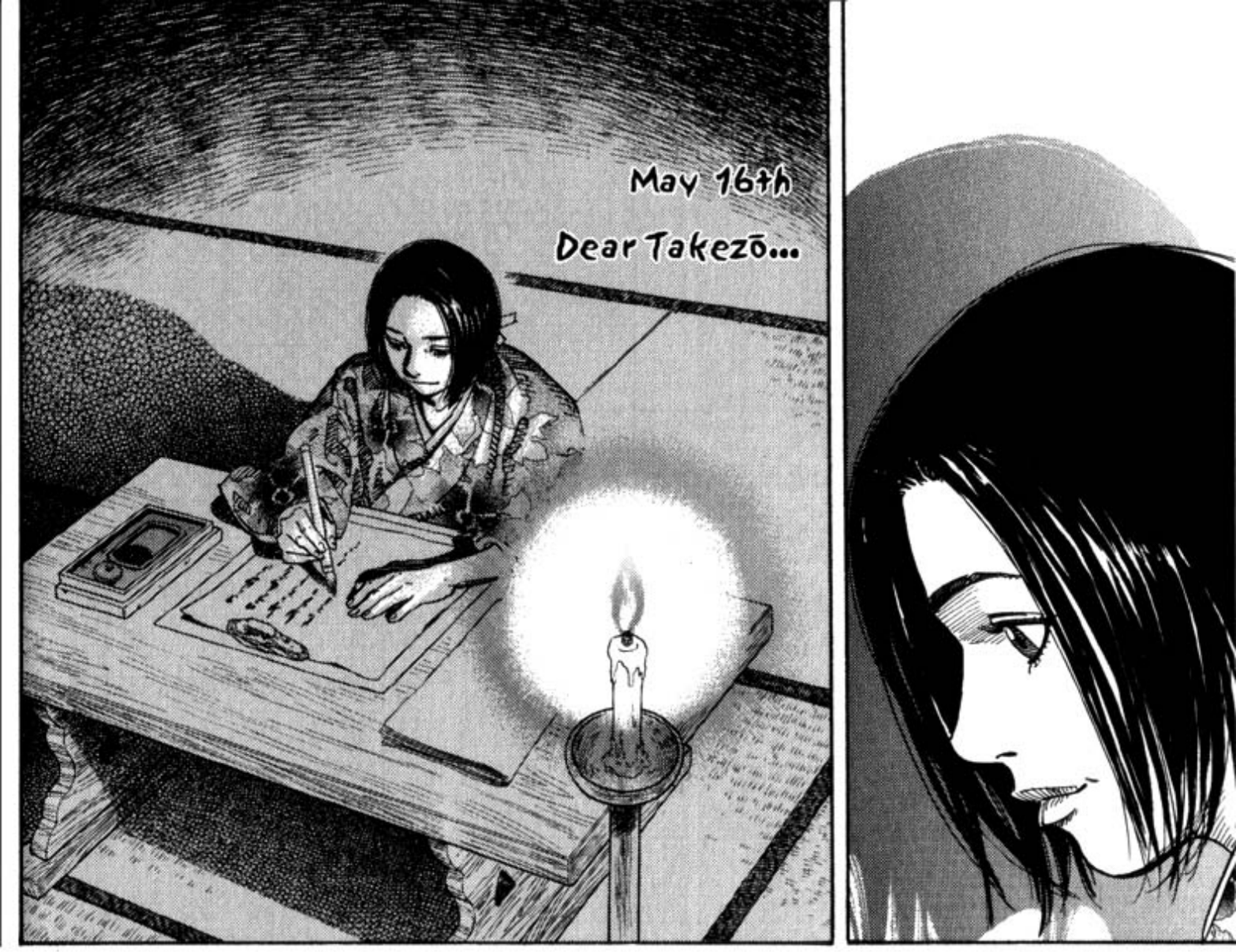
HRMPH
URGH...
TAKE IT EASY.
YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED YET.



...!!

INSHUN REALIZES THIS...
BUT BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT GENIUS...
...ONLY INSHUN'S OPPONENTS' LIVES ARE EVER AT RISK.

THUMP THMP
HUF.
THUMP THMP
HUF.
THUMP THMP
HUF.
INSHUN...!!


May 16th
Dear Takezō...

Everyone knows the great Yagyū Sekishūsai Muneyoshi of the Shinkage Style of swordsmanship.

The truth is he's very childish and a real sore loser.

OTSŪ...
YES?
SHALL WE CONTINUE OUR GAME FROM YESTERDAY?
CONTINUE? ...BUT YOU LOST, SIR!
NO, I DIDN'T.
OH, YES YOU DID!

THE GAME NEVER ENDED!!
NOW LET'S CONTINUE!!
BY STARTING OVER.

Pretty funny, huh, Takezō?

MNCH
MNCH

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
KRRNCH

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH

...

WANT MORE?
YES, PLEASE.

NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE, A FIGHT TO THE DEATH IS A TERRIFYING ORDEAL.
EVEN FOR ME.

...AND KEEP IT AT BAY.
BUT THERE IS A WAY TO FACE THAT FEAR...
KRICH
HRMPH.

...!!

BUT ONLY THE TRULY STRONG CAN SUCCEED IN DOING SO.
HRMPH

INSHUN HAS NEVER KNOWN "FEAR."
SO HE STILL HAS MUCH TO LEARN...

FWIP

MUSASHI ...
THE YOUNG HEAL SO QUICKLY...
WILL *YOU* TEACH INSHUN THE MEANING OF "FEAR"...?

!

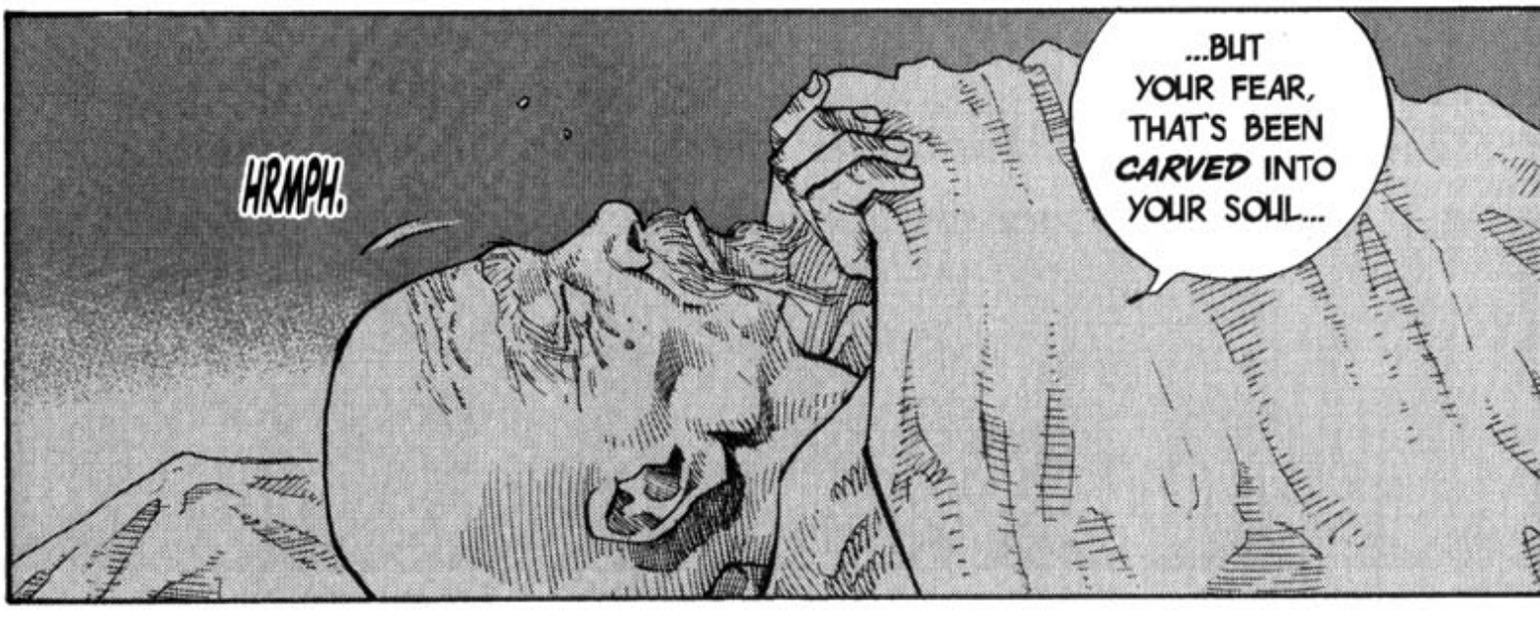
IF IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO KILL HIM.

Vagabond

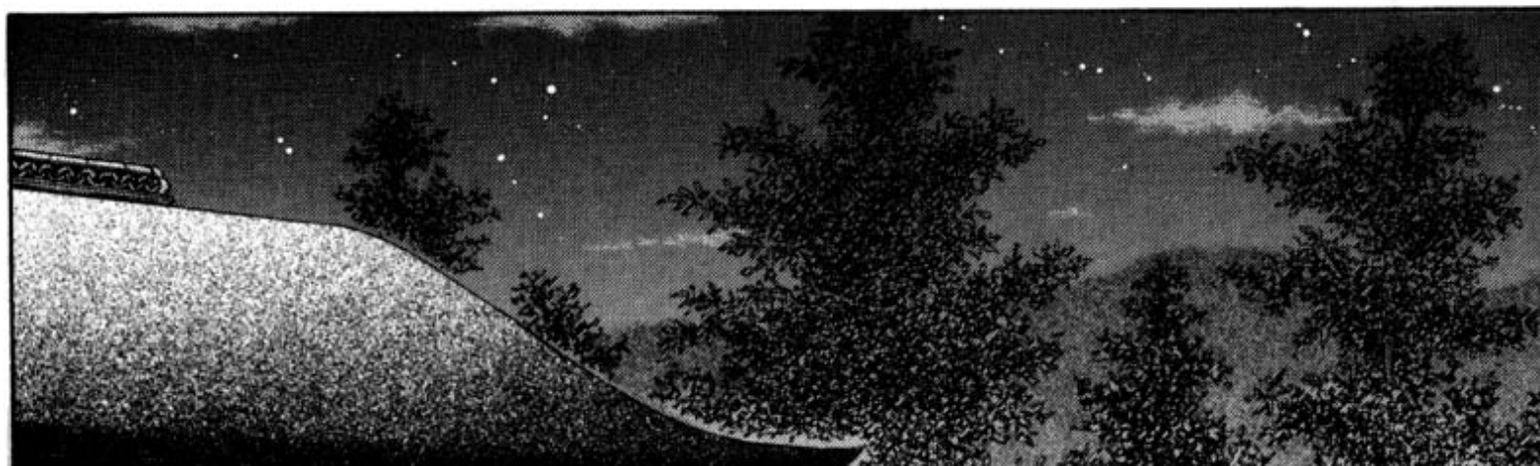
おやすみ
たけぞう
(GOOD NIGHT, TAKEZO.)

NNGH...
ARGH...
FWOOSH
AHH!!
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
...

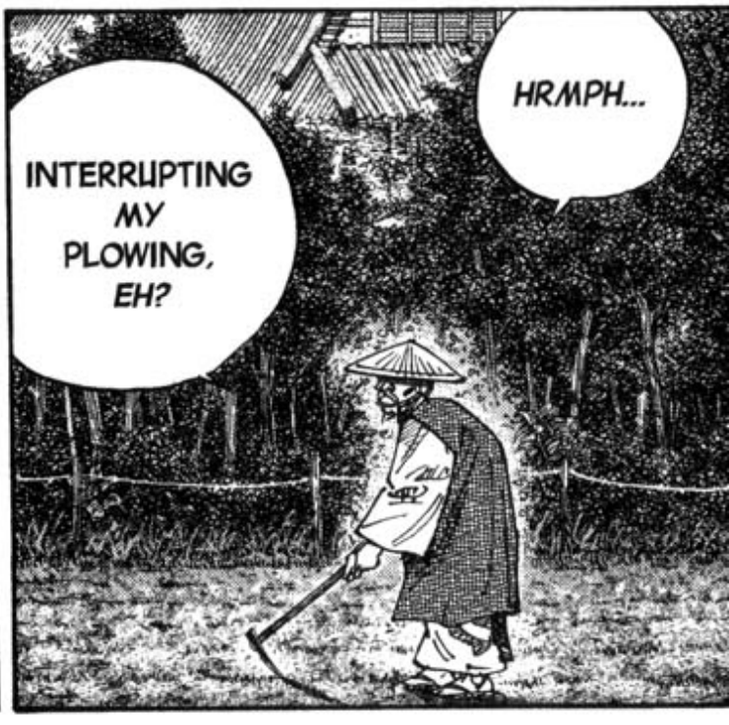
TIME...
IT MAY HEAL YOUR INJURIES...


...BUT YOUR FEAR, THAT'S BEEN *CARVED* INTO YOUR SOUL...
HRMPH.

HUF.
DAMN...
DAMN IT!!
HUF.
HUF.

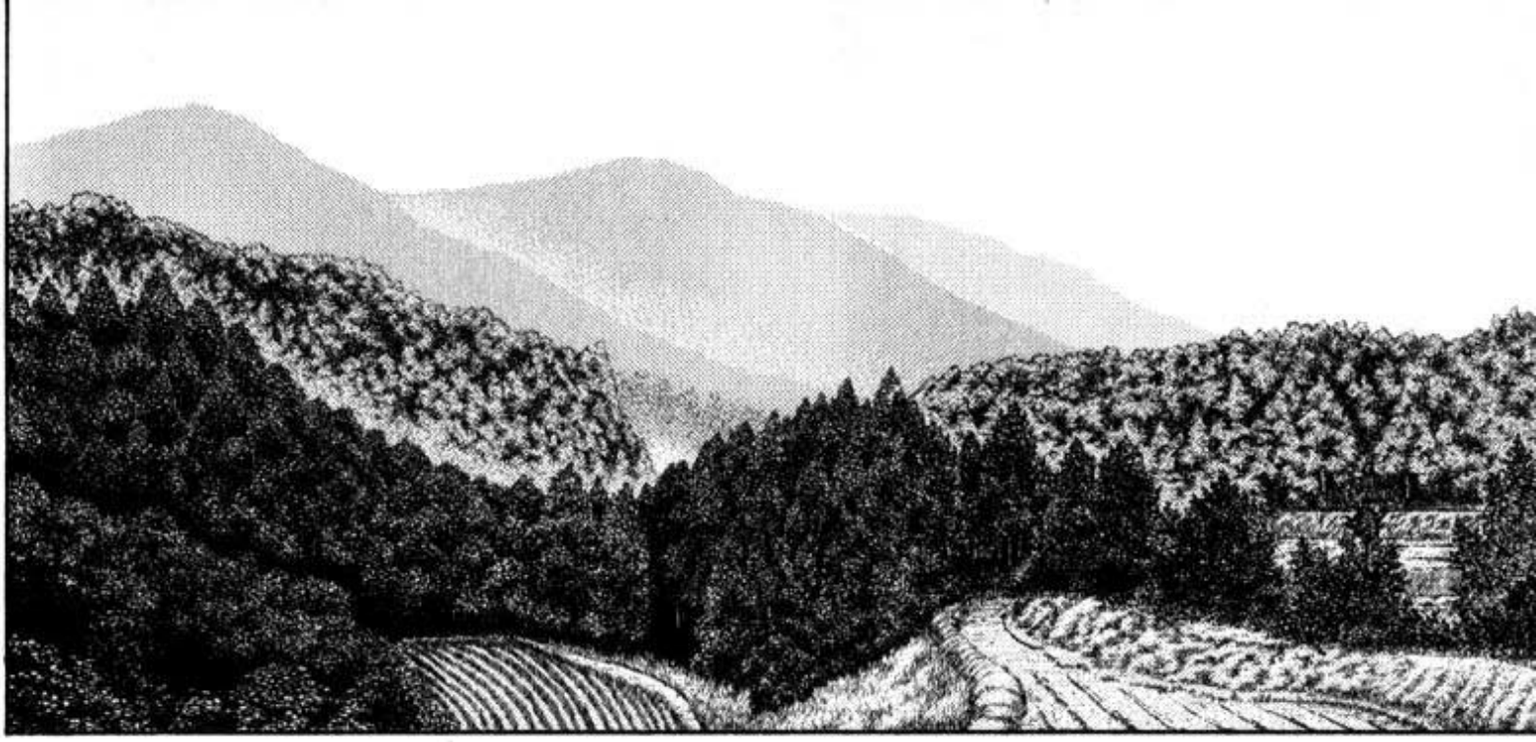


#52
Lying Low II
IT'S GETTING HOT...
HRMPH...


HRMPH...
INTERRUPTING MY PLOWING, EH?

PLEASE, YOU MUST TRAIN ME!
MASTER IN'EI...

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN JUST LET IT GO.
NO WAY!
INSHUN GAVE ME SUCH A BEATING...
I CAN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS.
YOU USUALLY CALL ME "OLD MAN" ...
...
WHAT'S THIS "MASTER" BUSINESS?
MASTER IN'EI!!
HMM...
PLEASE, OLD MAN!!



PHEW... GETTING TIRED.

...

KRICH

...TRAINING WITH ME...

IT WON'T BE EASY...

KRICH KRICH KRICH KRICH

HMPH...

THE TOUGHER THE TRAINING, THE BETTER!

KRICH KRICH

KRICH KRICH

FSSSSH!

FSSSHH

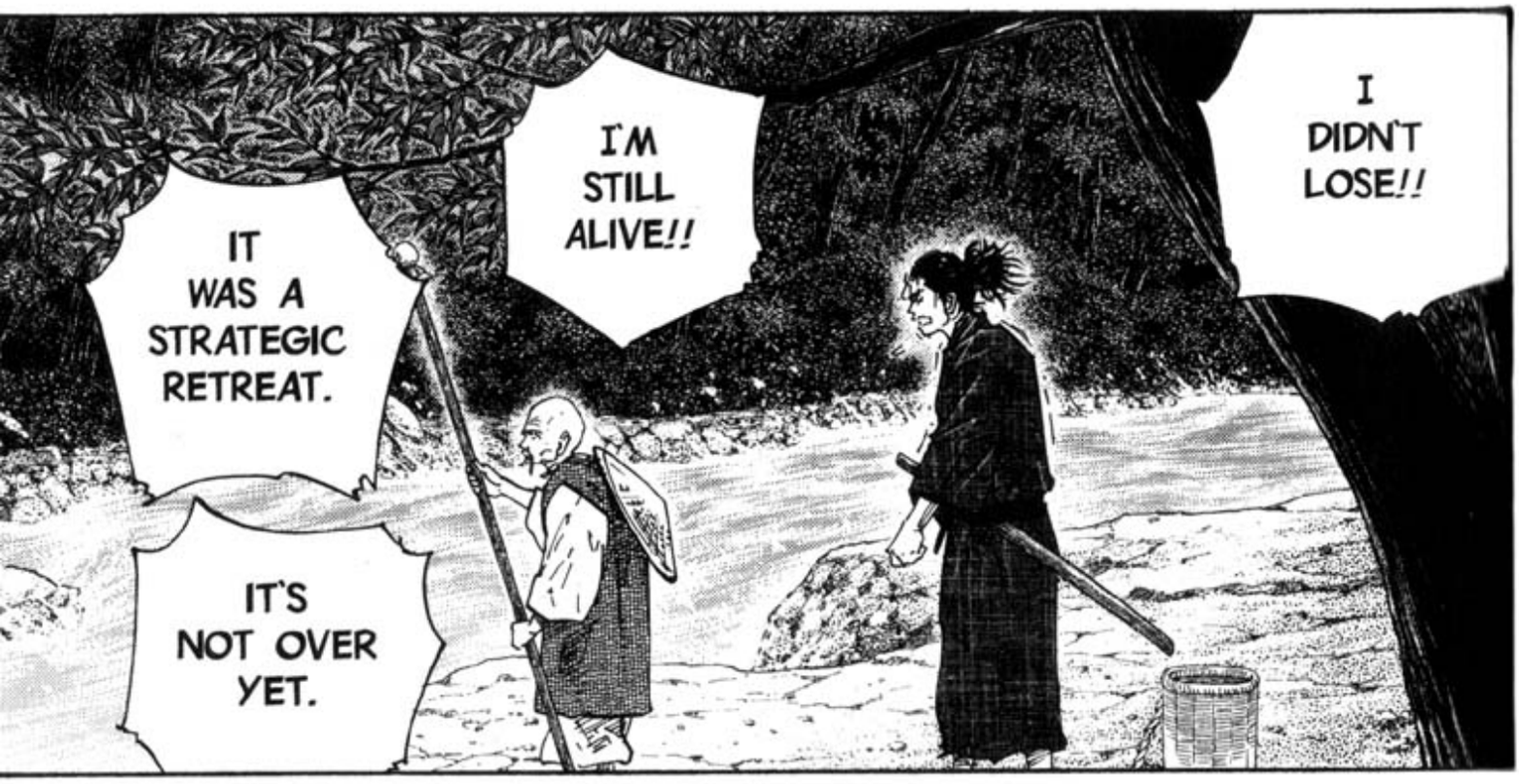
AND YOU'RE ASKING ME, INSHUN'S MASTER, TO TRAIN YOU?
HRMPH
YOU'RE AN ODD FELLOW.
HMPH!

TO BEAT INSHUN.

IF YOU WISH TO TRAIN, YOU MUST HAVE A GOAL.
TELL ME, MUSASHI, WHAT IS YOURS?

MUSASHI, IN ORDER TO DEFEAT INSHUN...
...YOU MUST DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE...
FSSS
DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT I ALREADY HAVE...?
SSSH
!!
AND YOU NEVER WILL... NOT UNTIL YOU'RE WILLING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.
HRMPH!
YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE.

HOW I LOST...?


I DIDN'T LOSE!!
I'M STILL ALIVE!!
IT WAS A STRATEGIC RETREAT.
IT'S NOT OVER YET.

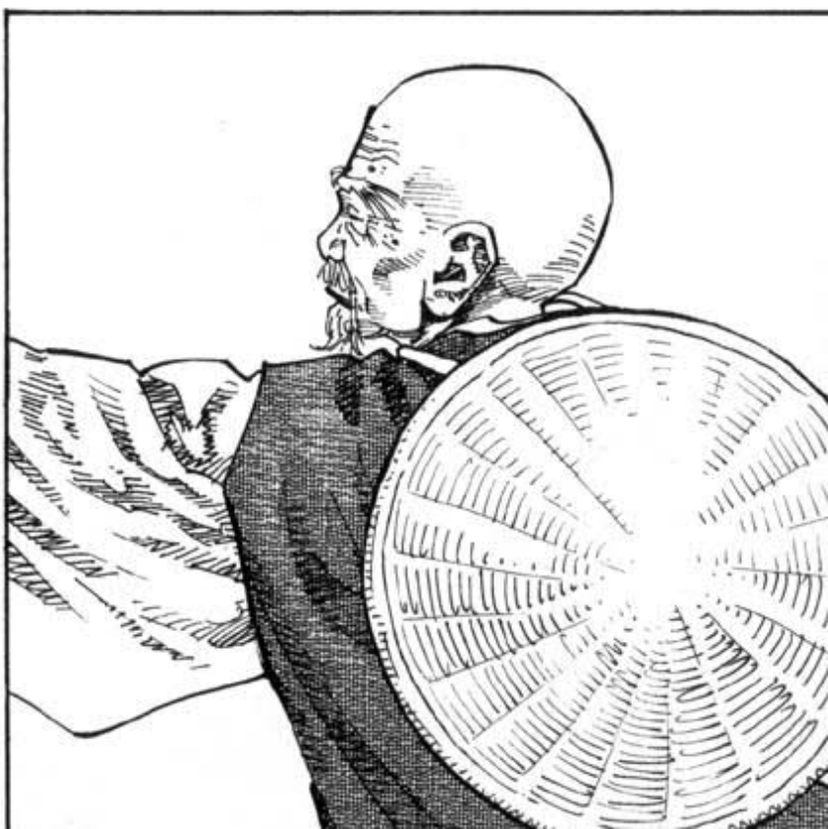
HRMPH!
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'VE RECOVERED ENOUGH TO *ACT* STRONG.
FSH

WHAT WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU DEFEAT INSHUN?
Flp

INSHUN...!
!!
FWOOSH

YAH!!
FWOOSH
HRMPH ...
FWOOSH
YAH!!
NNGH!
OLD MAN!!
ARGH!

THOK
YAH!
!!



SPLSSH

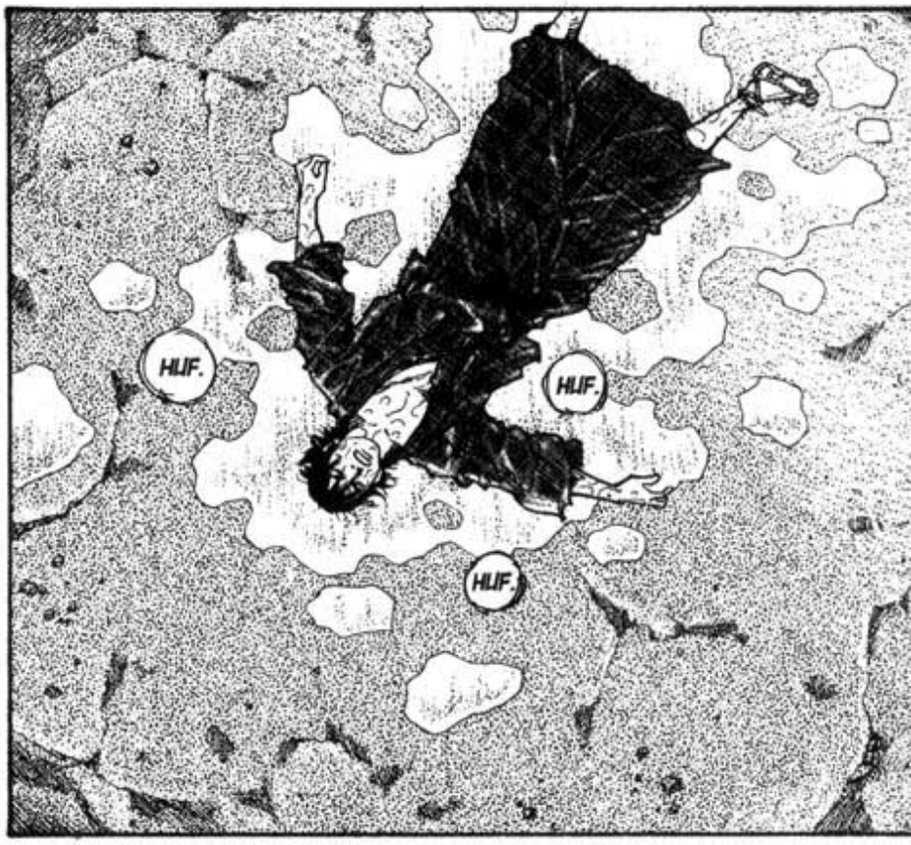
FSSSSH

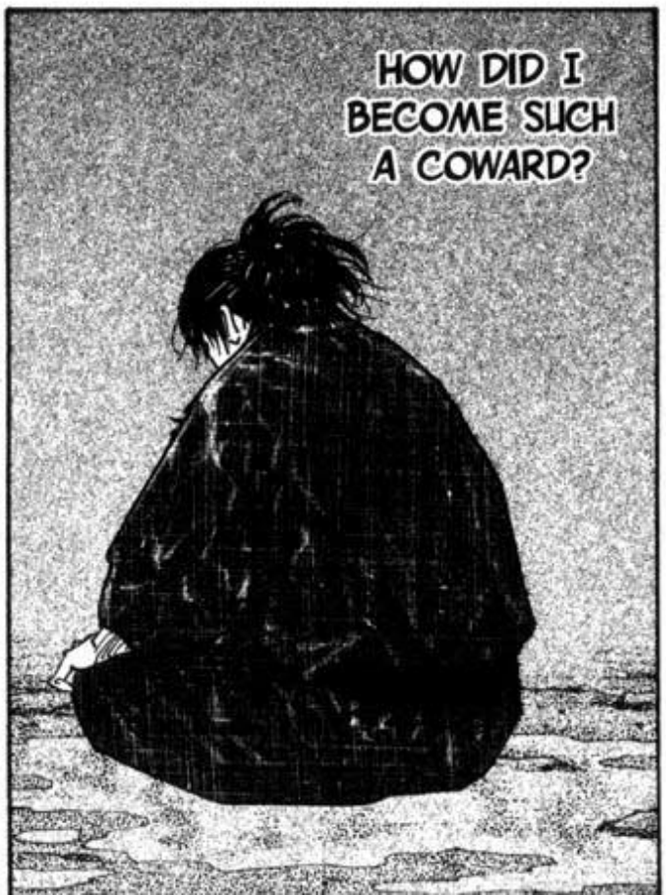
...
FSSSSH

...!!
FSSSSSH

UH-
OH...

YOU ALMOST DIED.
HRMPH!
...
HMPH!


HUF.
HUF.
HUF.


HOW DID I BECOME SUCH A COWARD?

DAMN!

DAMN!

DAMN IT!!

HOW CAN I BEAT HIM!?

I'M SCARED.

I'M SCARED OF INSHUN.

FSSS

SH
UNEASE...
WEAK-NESS...
DESIRE...

FSSH
HRMPH!
SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE HAVE MEDITATED UNDER RAGING WATERFALLS TO RID THEMSELVES OF SUCH THOUGHTS.

FEAR...

...!!

FSSSSSHHH

BY THE TIME YOU RISE UP OUT OF THE FALLS...
FSSHH
...YOU SHALL BECOME TRULY AWARE.

...
...

...THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO DO ANY GOOD.
THUD
!!

YOU ALMOST DIED.
...
WEEZ.
HUF.
HUF.

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

FSSSSHHH
...
...

WHY DID WE COME OUT HERE, ANYWAY!?
HM? YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK WITH ME.
FWIP
HEY!!
HRMPH, TIME TO GO HOME, BEFORE THE SUN SETS.
YOU ARE STAYING HERE.
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, THERE'S PLENTY OF FISH AND BIRDS OUT HERE...
...NOT TO MENTION BEASTS.
THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...
...!!

AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?

!!

HRMPH ...

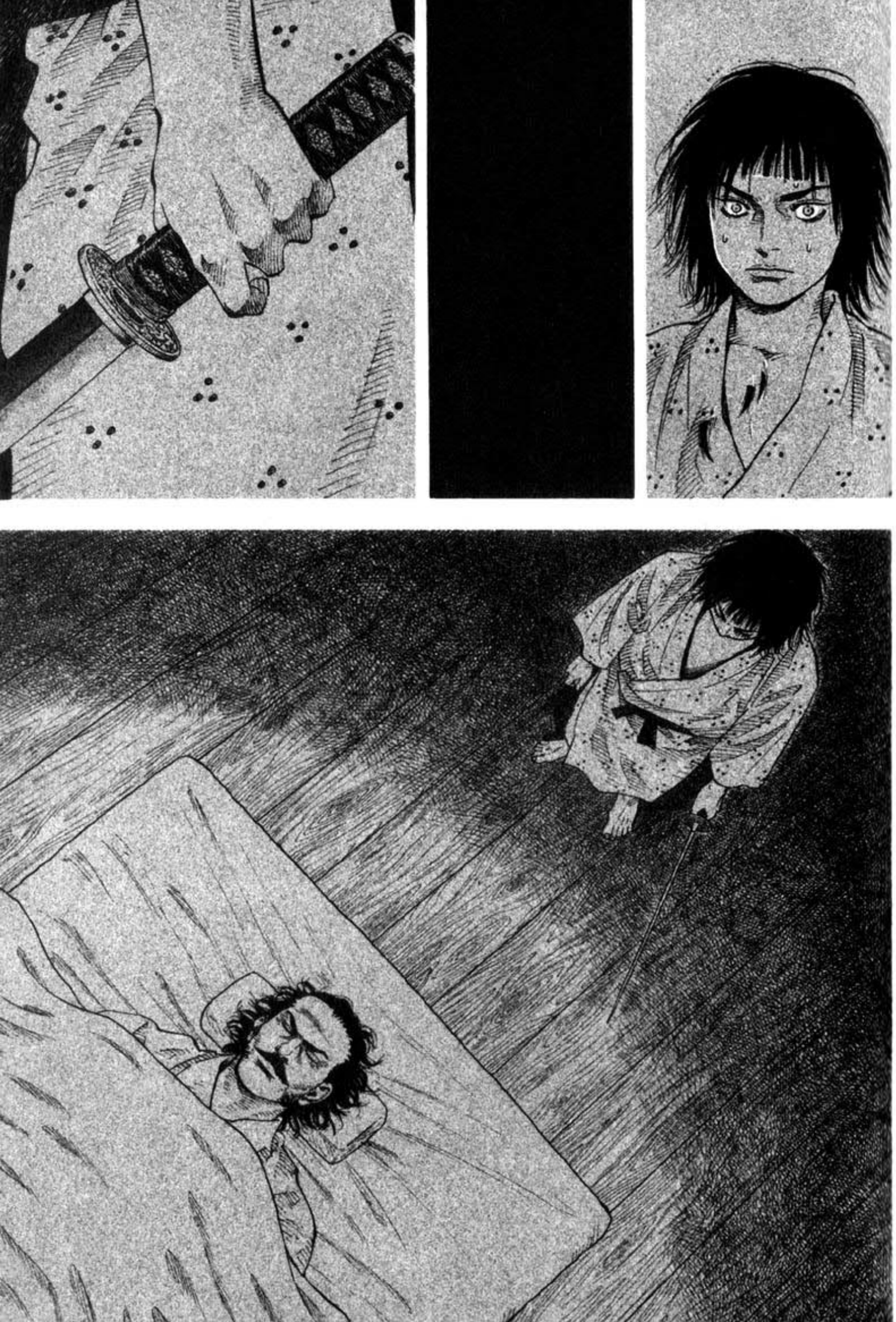
HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR FEAR...
THE ANSWER TO THAT, YOU MAY FIND OUT HERE.

INSHUN OF HOZOIN...
TUGG
I WILL DEFEAT YOU...
FICH
FICH
FWICH
IT'S NOT OVER YET.
FICH
I WILL!!
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP
EEP

#53 | Journey

FORGIVE ME...

AND AREN'T THE MOUNTAINS THE ONLY TEACHER YOU'VE EVER HAD?
THE MOUNTAINS... THAT'S WHERE YOU CAME FROM...
KRNCH
KRNCH
CHOMP
CHOMP
WHERE I CAME FROM...
FWUMP
HOME...



!!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.

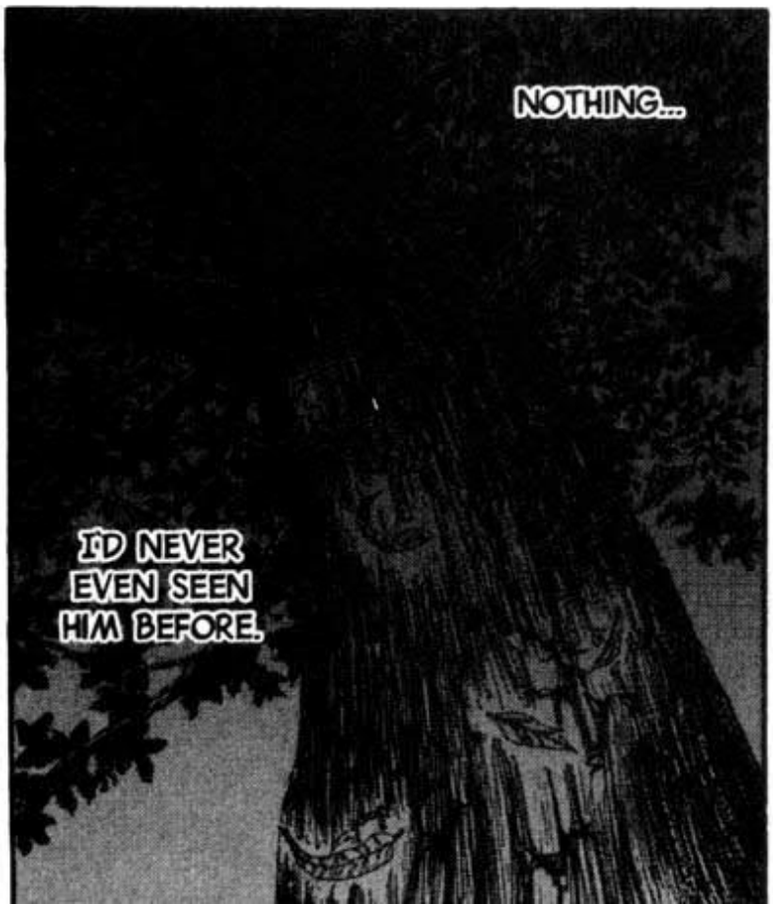
THUP
AH!

FWIP

NOTHING AT ALL...

PHEW.

SLISH
SLISH
SLISH

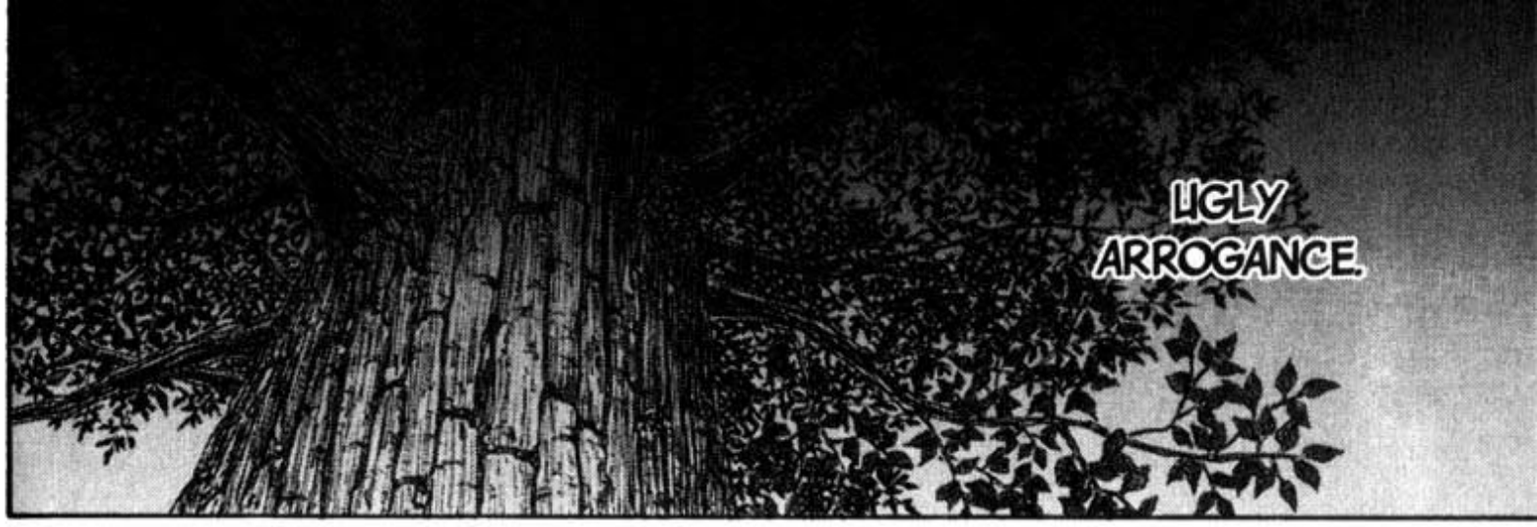

NOTHING...
I'D NEVER EVEN SEEN HIM BEFORE.

WHAT DID I KNOW ABOUT INSHIN?

I JUST CHARGED IN BLINDLY...
...FOR AMBITION'S SAKE.

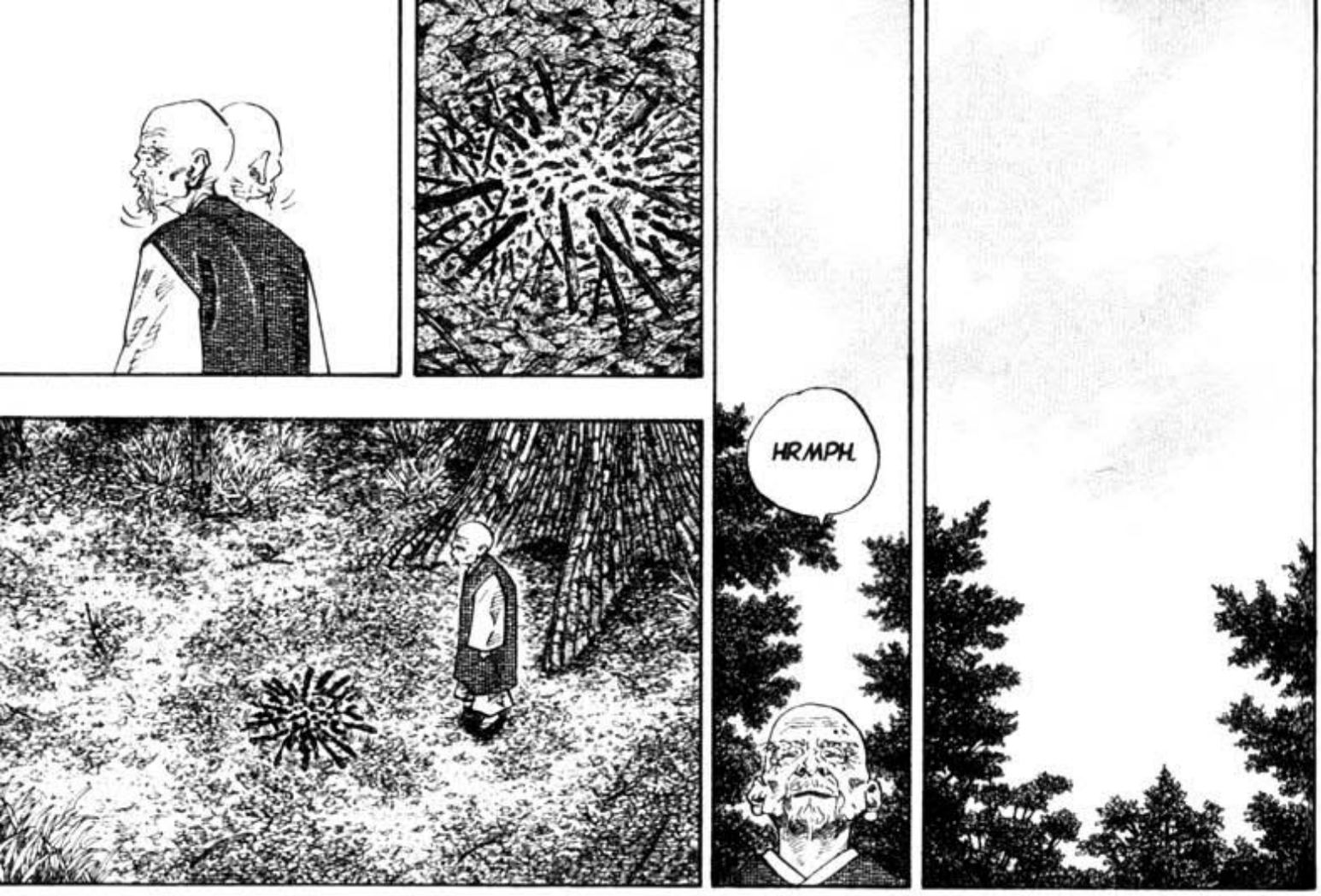
I HAVE NO STYLE.
I'M OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT MY STRENGTH...
ONCE I GET INTO A FIGHT, I THINK I'LL MANAGE TO WIN, SOMEHOW...

IMMATURE...


UGLY
ARROGANCE.

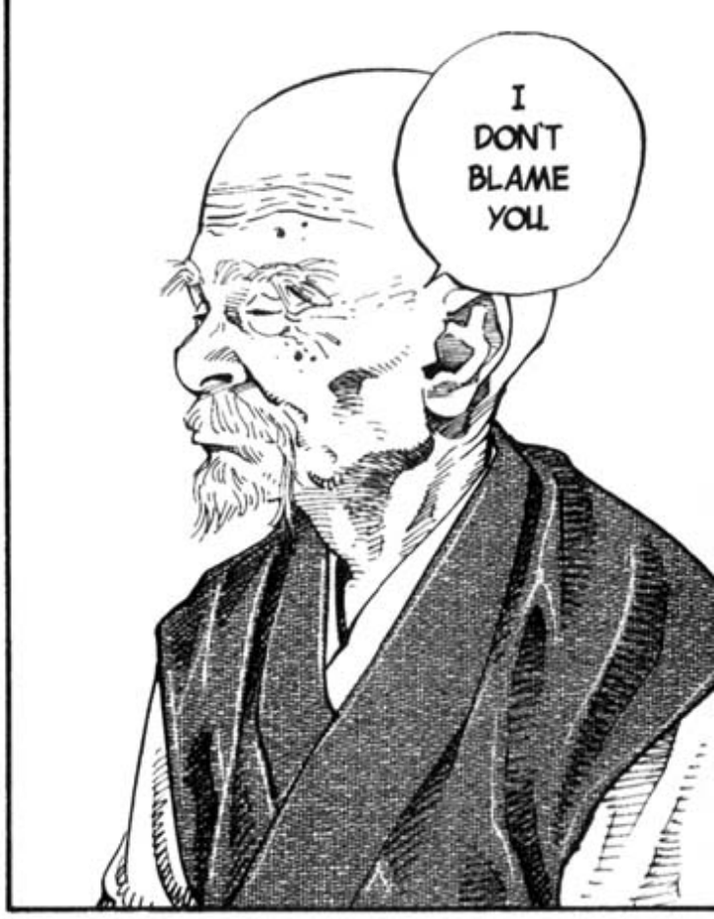
HUF.
HUF.
INEXCUSABLE.
MIYAMOTO
MUSASHI...!!
HUF.
HUF.

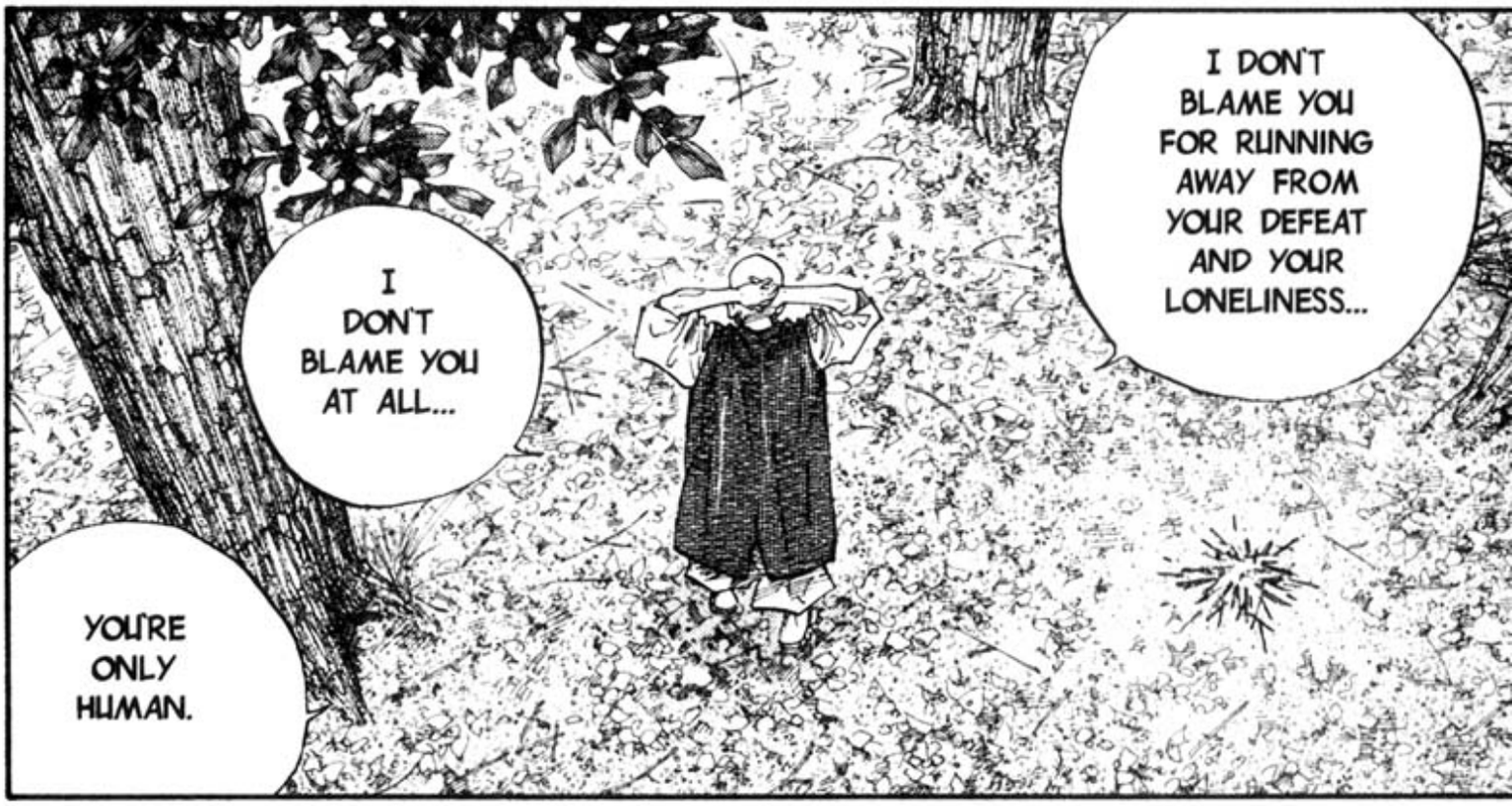
HUF.
YOU
HAVE NO
EXCUSE!!
HUF.
HUF.


HRMPH.

...
HM...

YOU WERE SO OVERCONFIDENT AND RECKLESS.
YOUR FIRST DEFEAT MUST HAVE BEEN ALL THE MORE SHOCKING TO YOU.


I DON'T BLAME YOU.


I DON'T BLAME YOU AT ALL...
I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR RUNNING AWAY FROM YOUR DEFEAT AND YOUR LONELINESS...
YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN.

HRMPH.

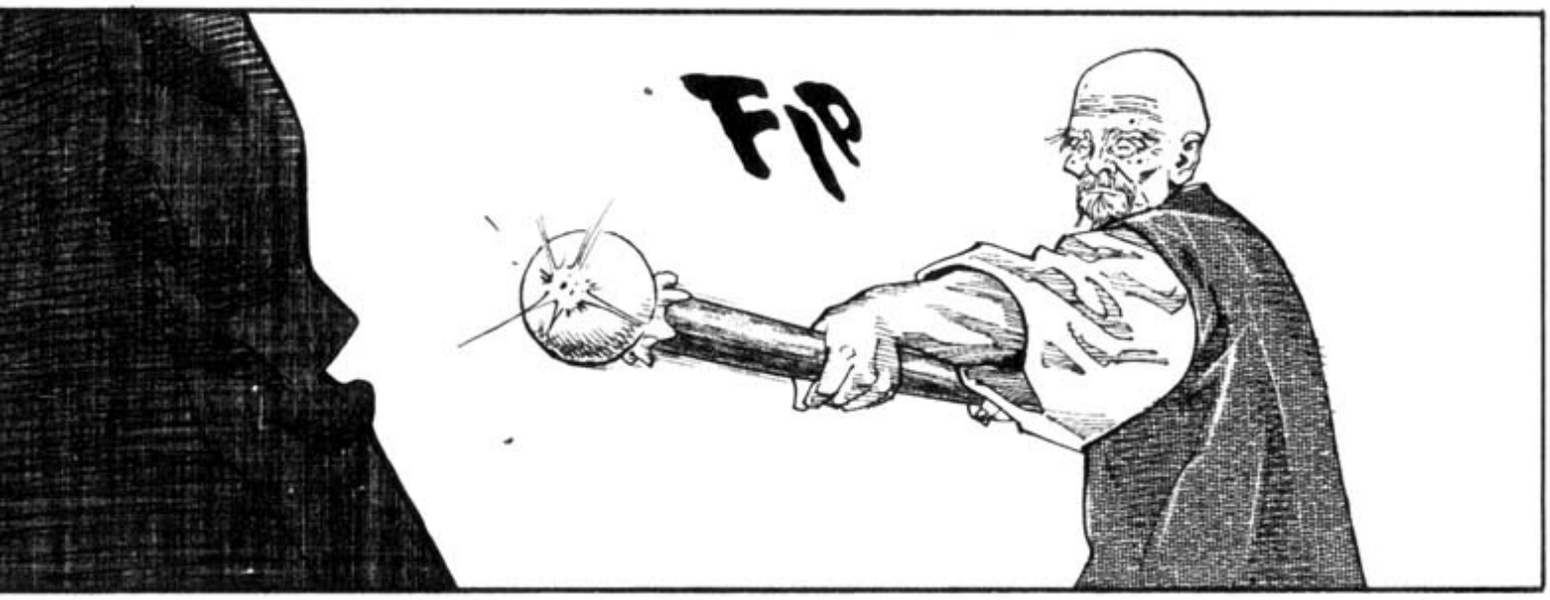
I'M GOING TO KILL INSHUN!!
FSSSSSS
BRR BRR...
HHH

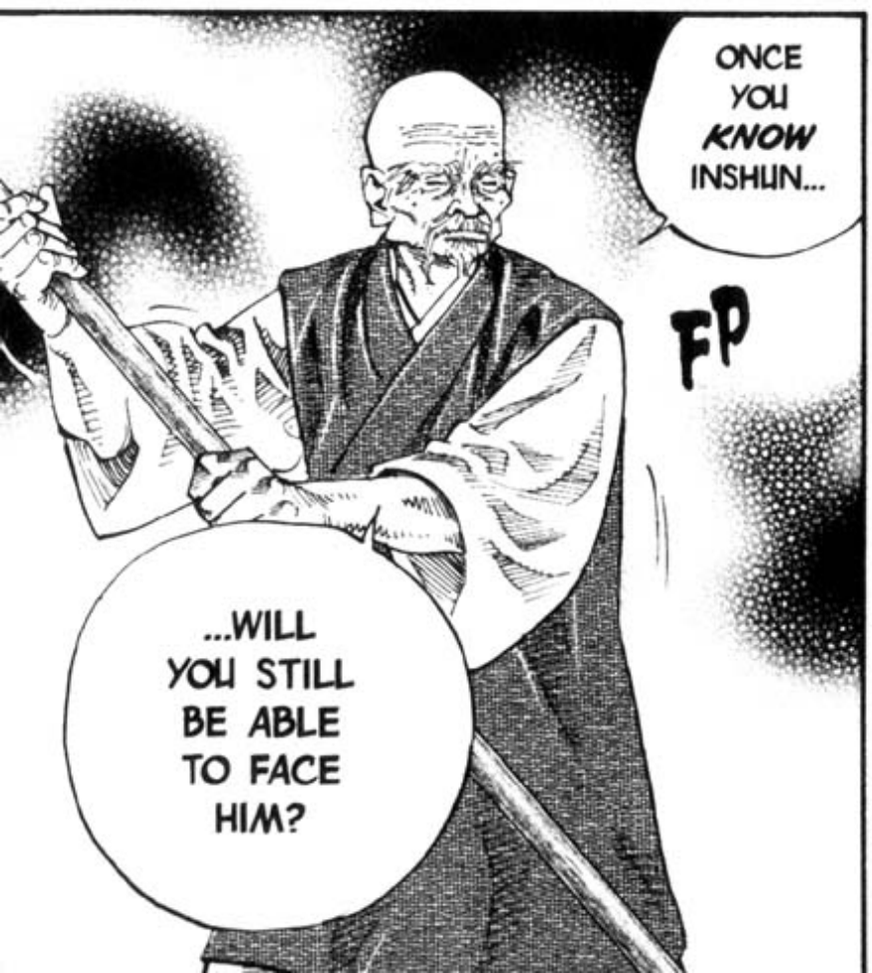
WATERFALL'S NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL, OLD MAN.
FSSSHH
WASHES AWAY ALL YOUR DISTRACTIONS.
SO IT *DID* HELP YOU FIND SOME ANSWERS...
TELL ME... HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MASTERING YOUR FEAR?
SMIRK

I DIDN'T LOSE.
IT WAS JUST A STEP TOWARDS VICTORY!
...
SO YOU'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU LOST.
I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT INSHUN.

FSSHH
TRAIN ME, OLD MAN!!

FWISH

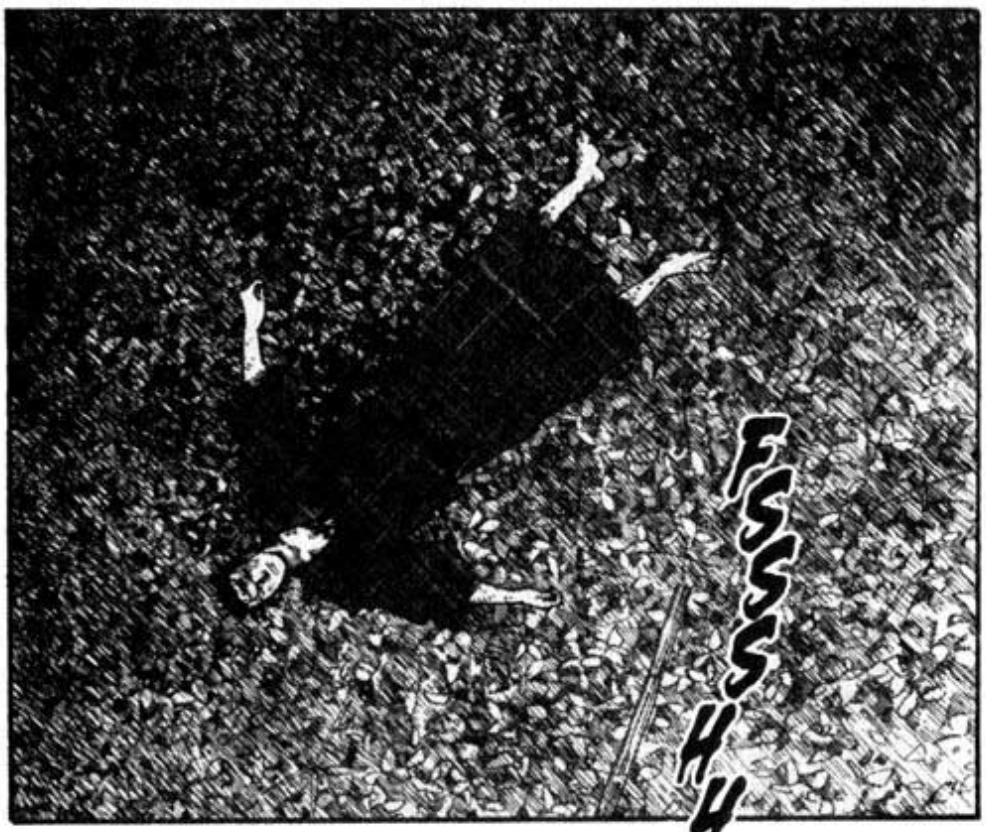

FP

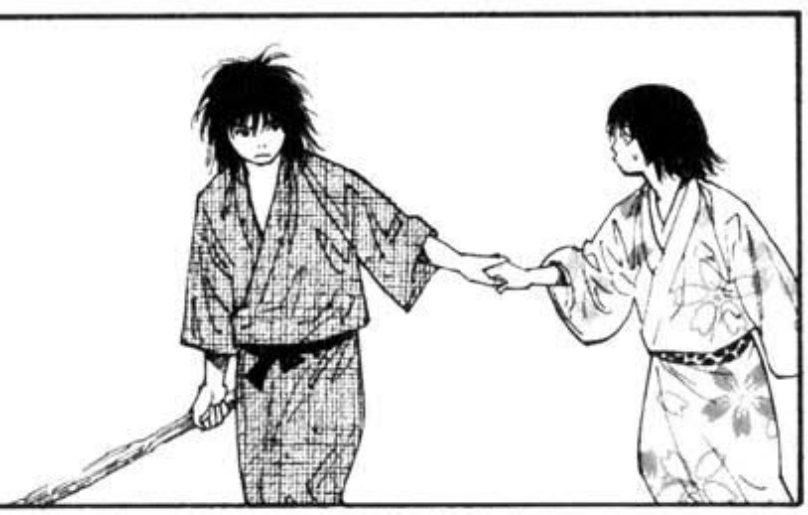

ONCE YOU KNOW INSHUN...
FP
...WILL YOU STILL BE ABLE TO FACE HIM?

!!
THP

...
...

I CAN'T MOVE FORWARD...
KRICH
...UNLESS I BEAT HIM.


FSSSHH



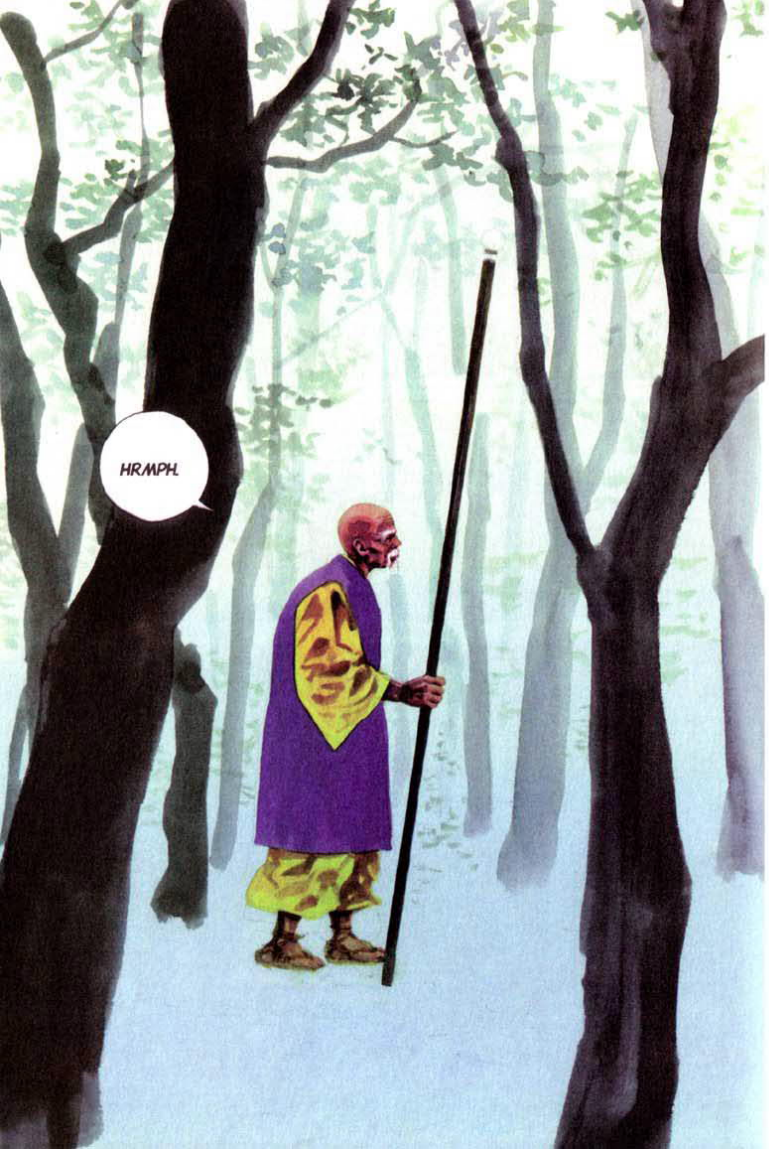
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING HERE...?
AM I MAKING ANY PROGRESS AT ALL?
OR AM I JUST FALLING APART?

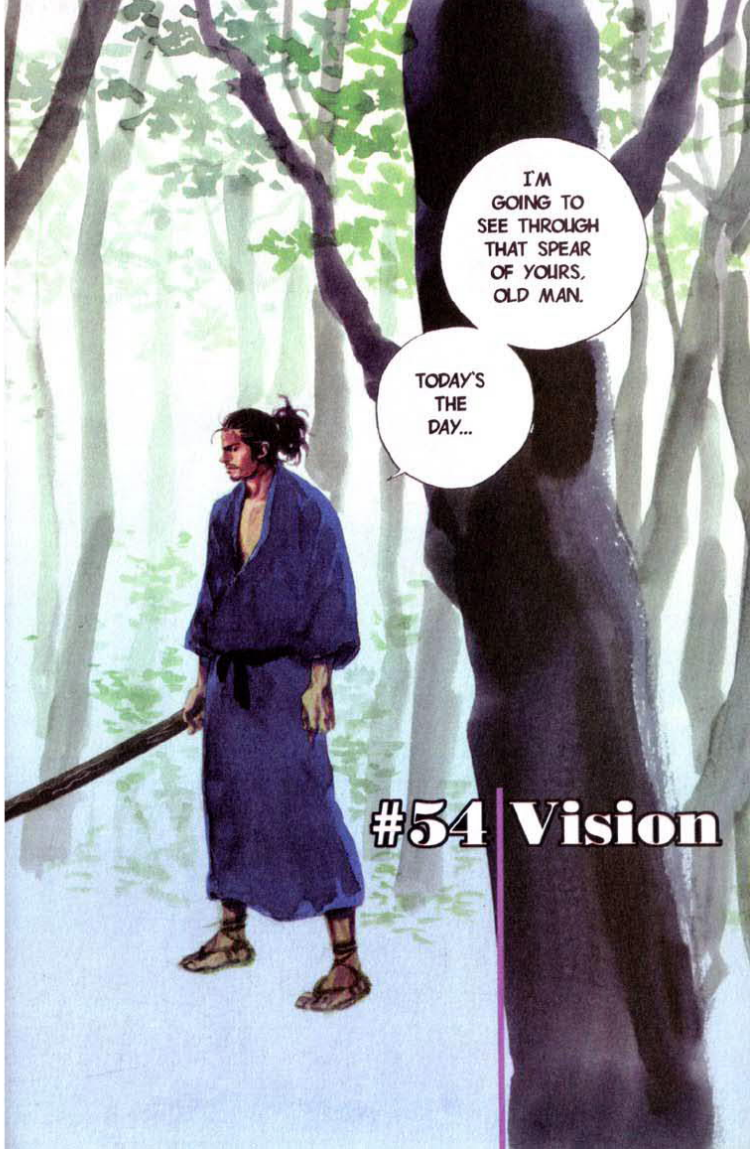
TELL ME IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY...

Vagabond

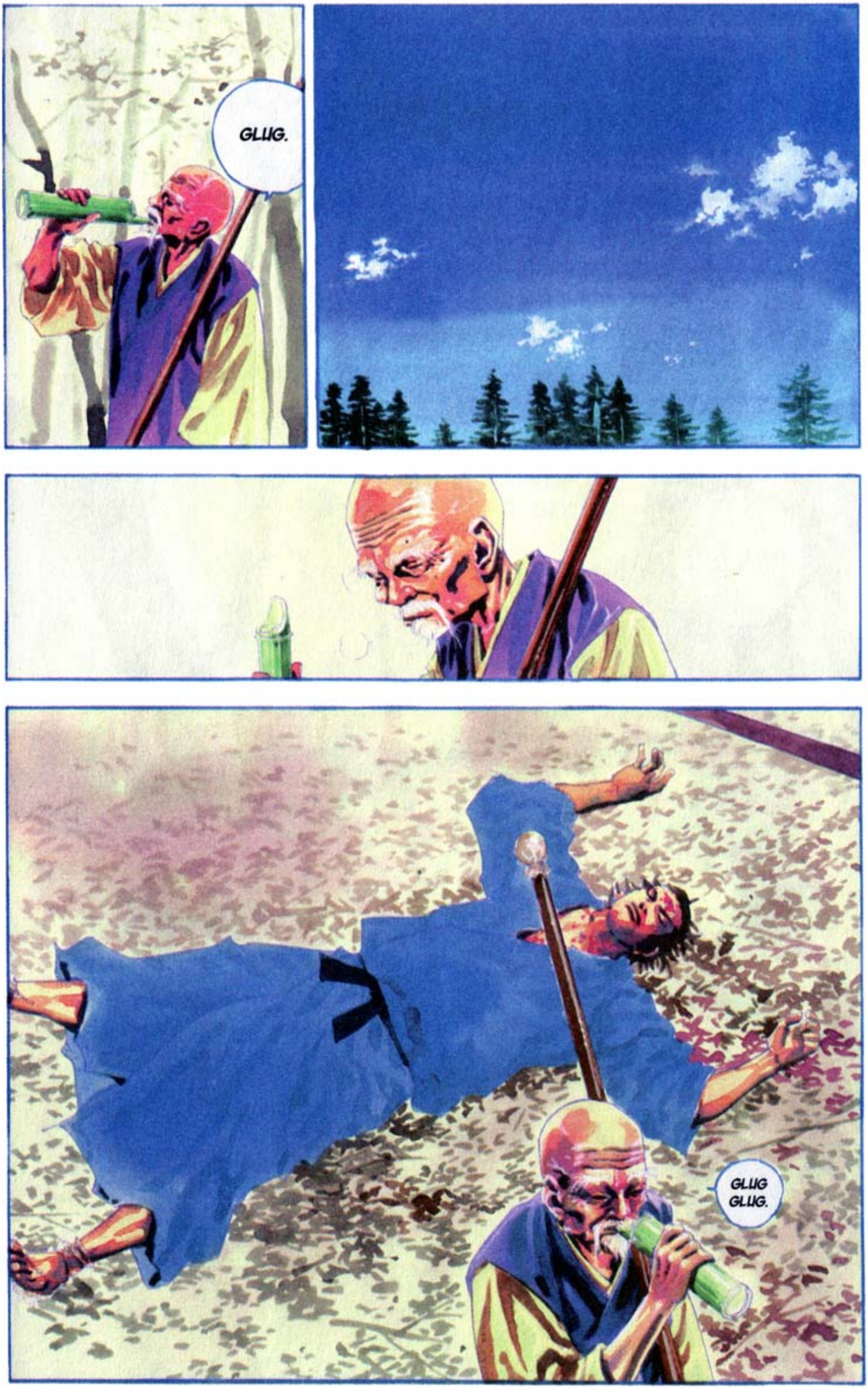
(ZZZ... TELL ME IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY...)

YOU'RE HERE.
HRMPH.


HRMPH.


I'M GOING TO SEE THROUGH THAT SPEAR OF YOURS, OLD MAN.
TODAY'S THE DAY...

#54 Vision


GLUG.
GLUG GLUG.

URGH...
HA HA HA
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
AND I'M JUST AN OLD MAN WHO RETIRED A LONG TIME AGO.
FWIP
FICH
FICH

FWOOSH

FWOM
FWIM
FORGIVE ME...

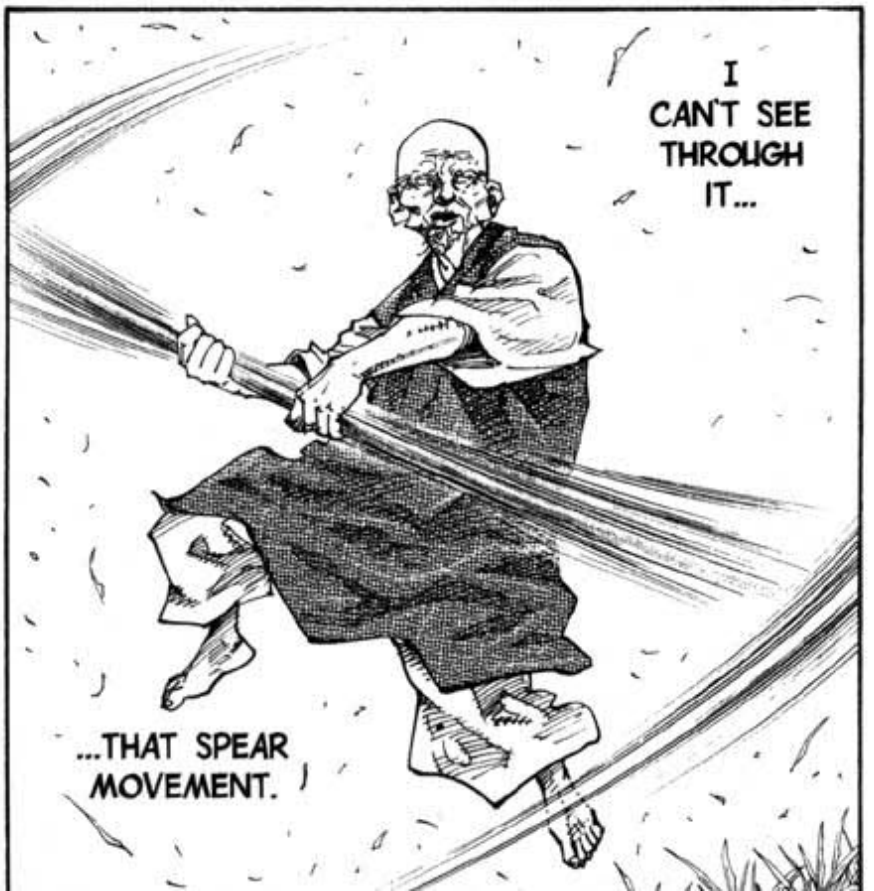
KRAKKL
KRAKKL

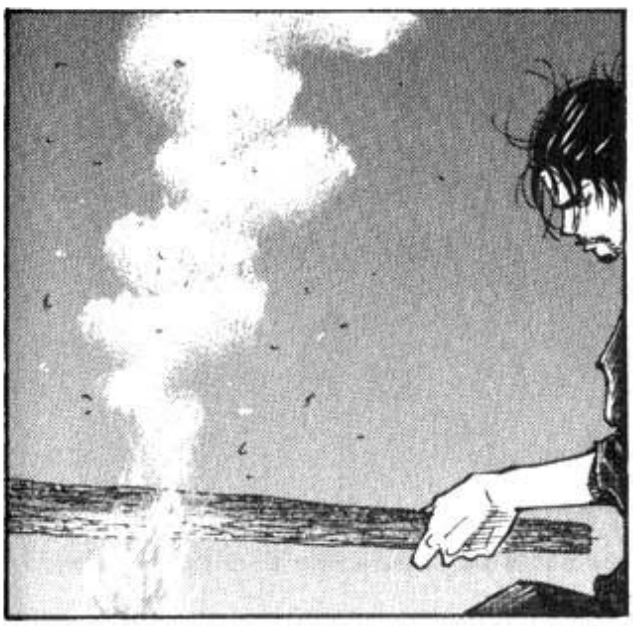
HRMPH
THE GREAT IN'EI...

HMPH.
DAMN THAT OLD MAN.

CHOMP

I DON'T HAVE THE VISION.


I CAN'T SEE THROUGH IT...
...THAT SPEAR MOVEMENT.

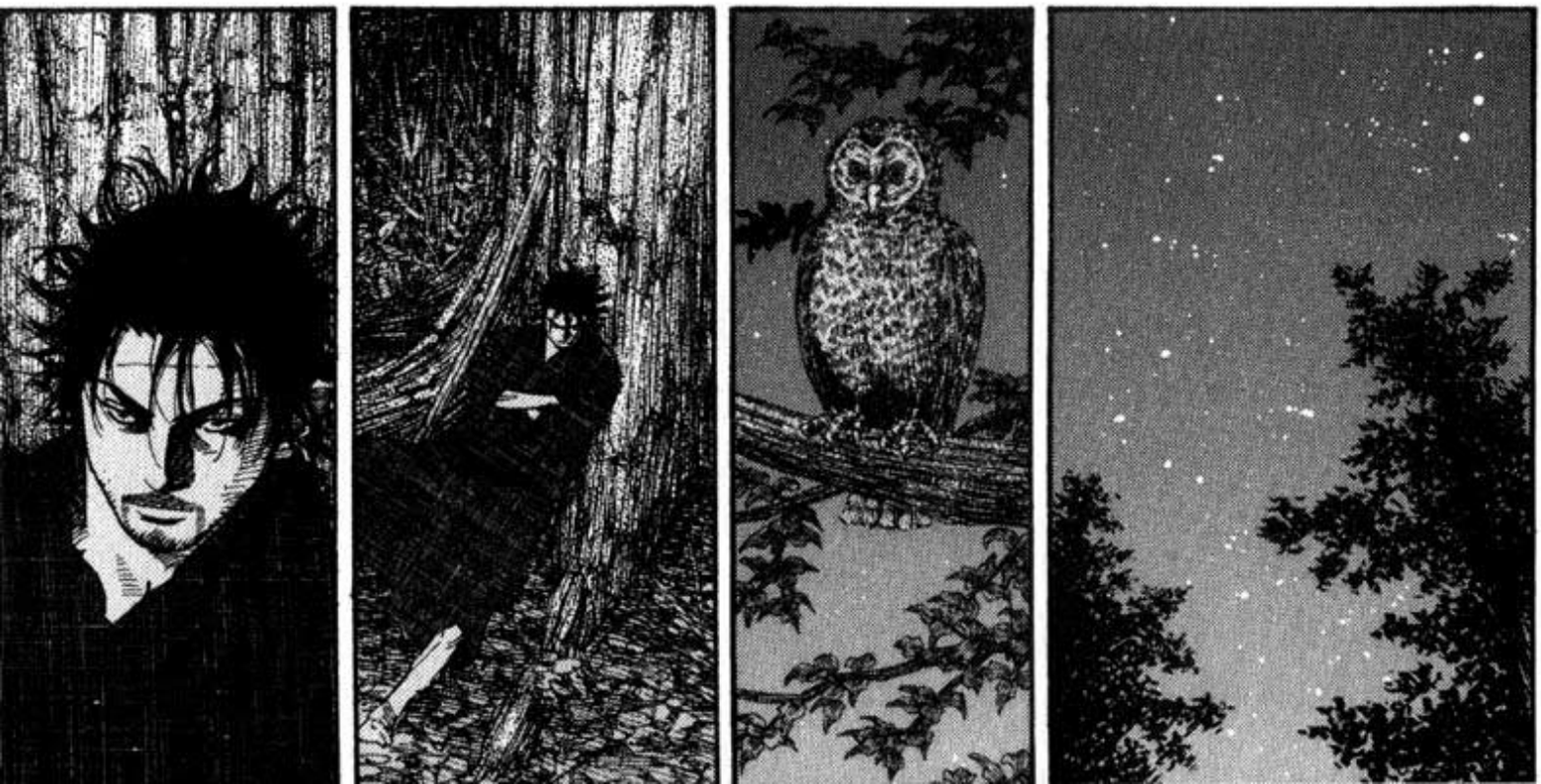


ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED...

...YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE.

WHAT WENT WRONG...?
WHAT COULD HAVE DISTRACTED ME...?

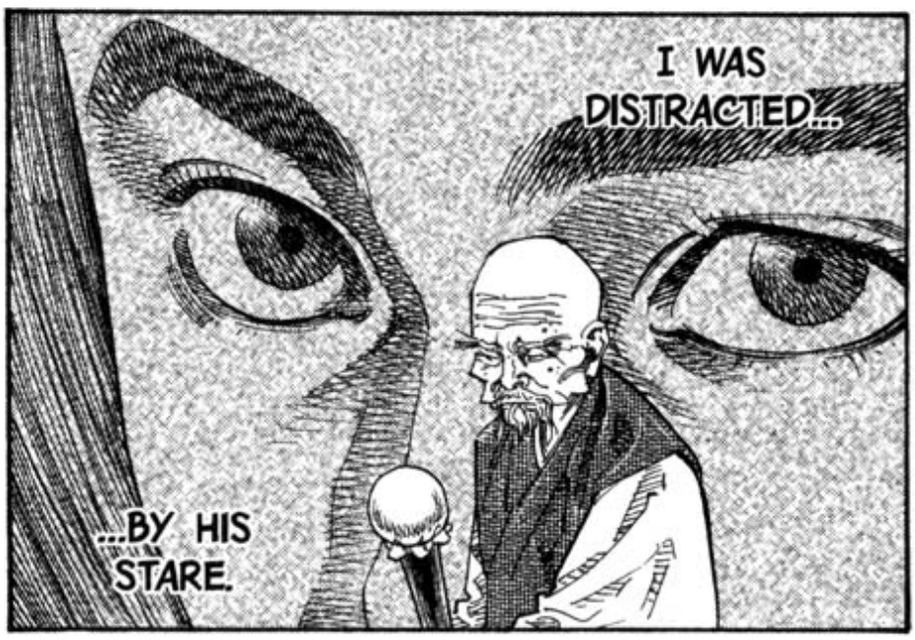
...



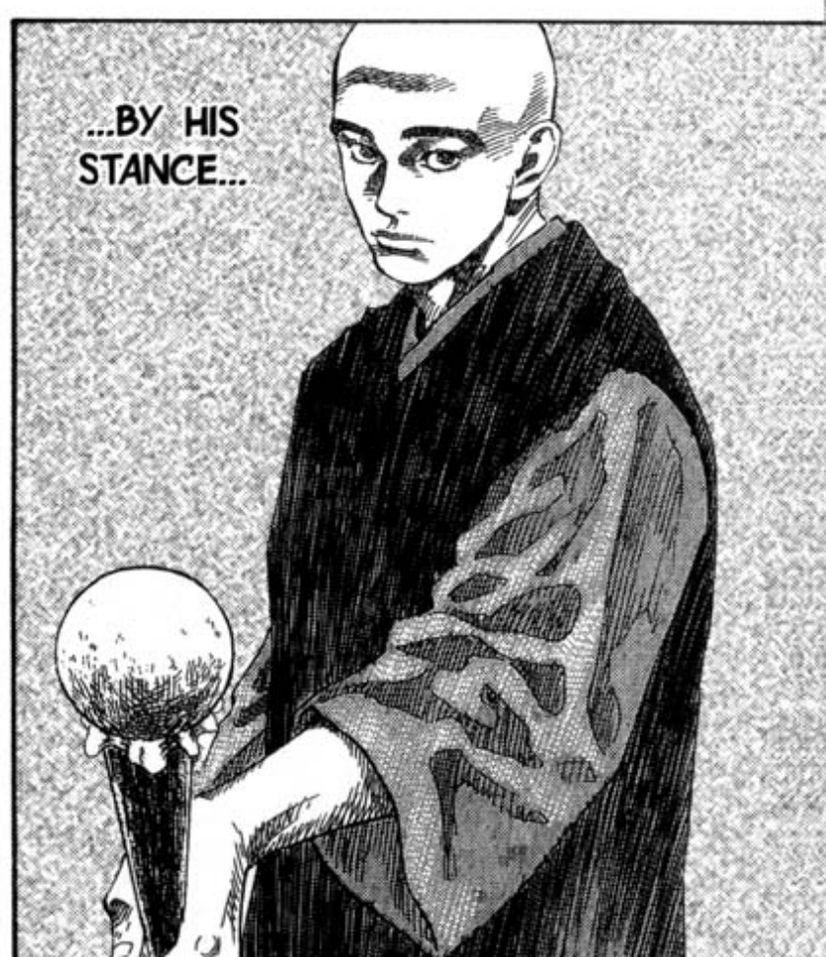
PRE-
OCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE TREE,
YOU'LL MISS
THE ENTIRE
FOREST.
PREOCCUPIED
WITH A
SINGLE LEAF...
...YOU
WON'T
SEE THE
TREE.
DID I
HAVE
THE
VISION...
...TO
REALLY
SEE INSHUN
IN THAT
FIGHT?

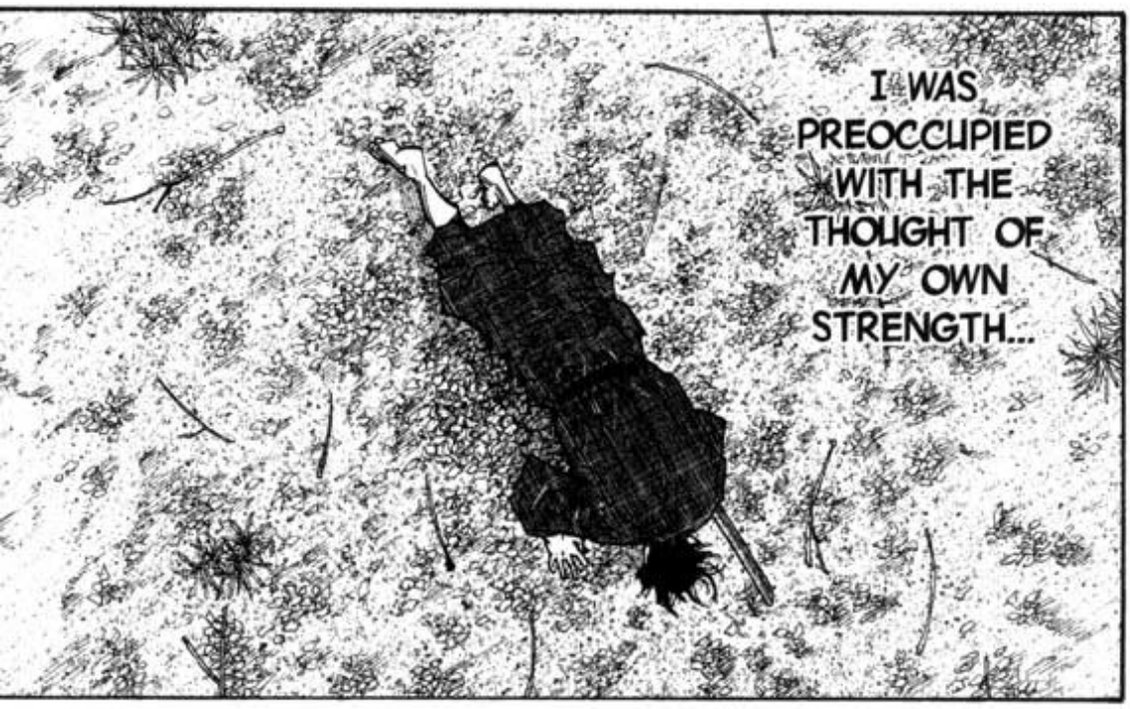
FOOL!
COWARD!

I WAS DISTRACTED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.


I WAS DISTRACTED...
...BY HIS STARE.

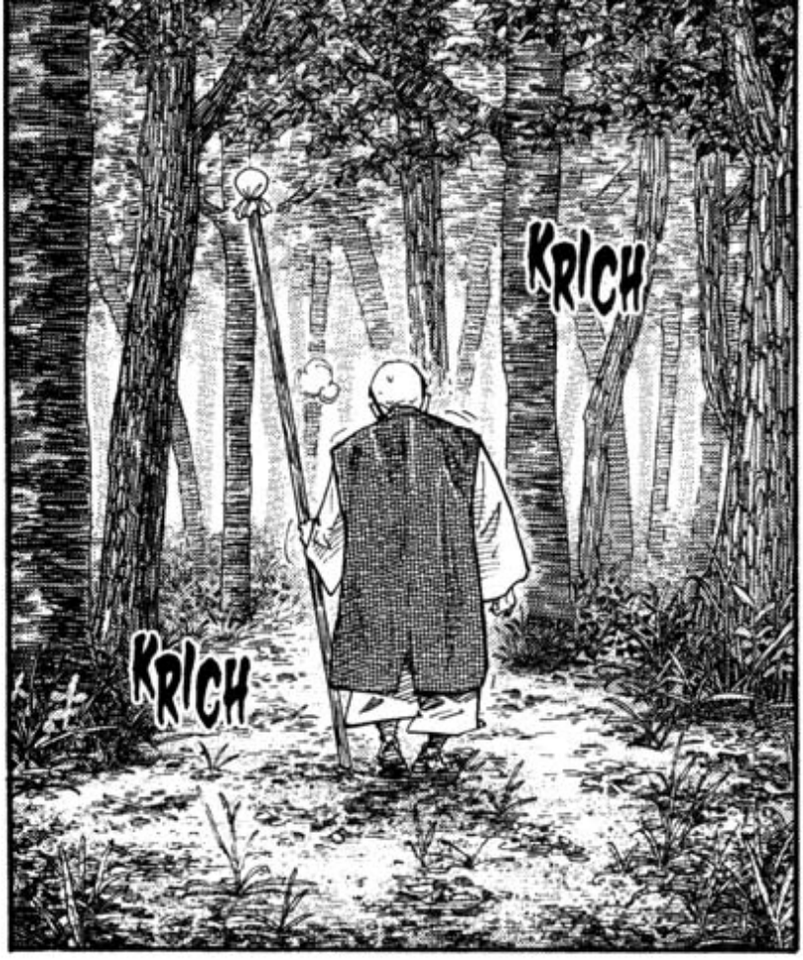
TUNK


...BY HIS STANCE...

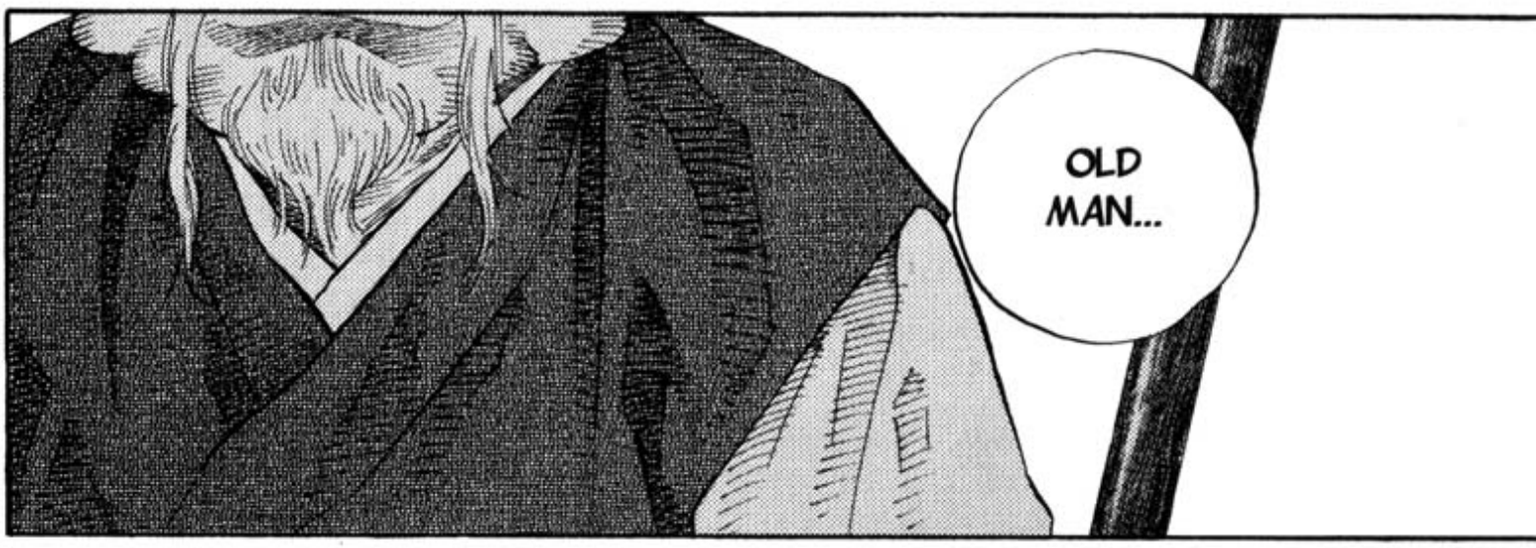

I WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE THOUGHT OF MY OWN STRENGTH...

AND I WAS DISTRACTED BY ONE MORE THING...

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD'VE "SEEN" MY OPPONENT...

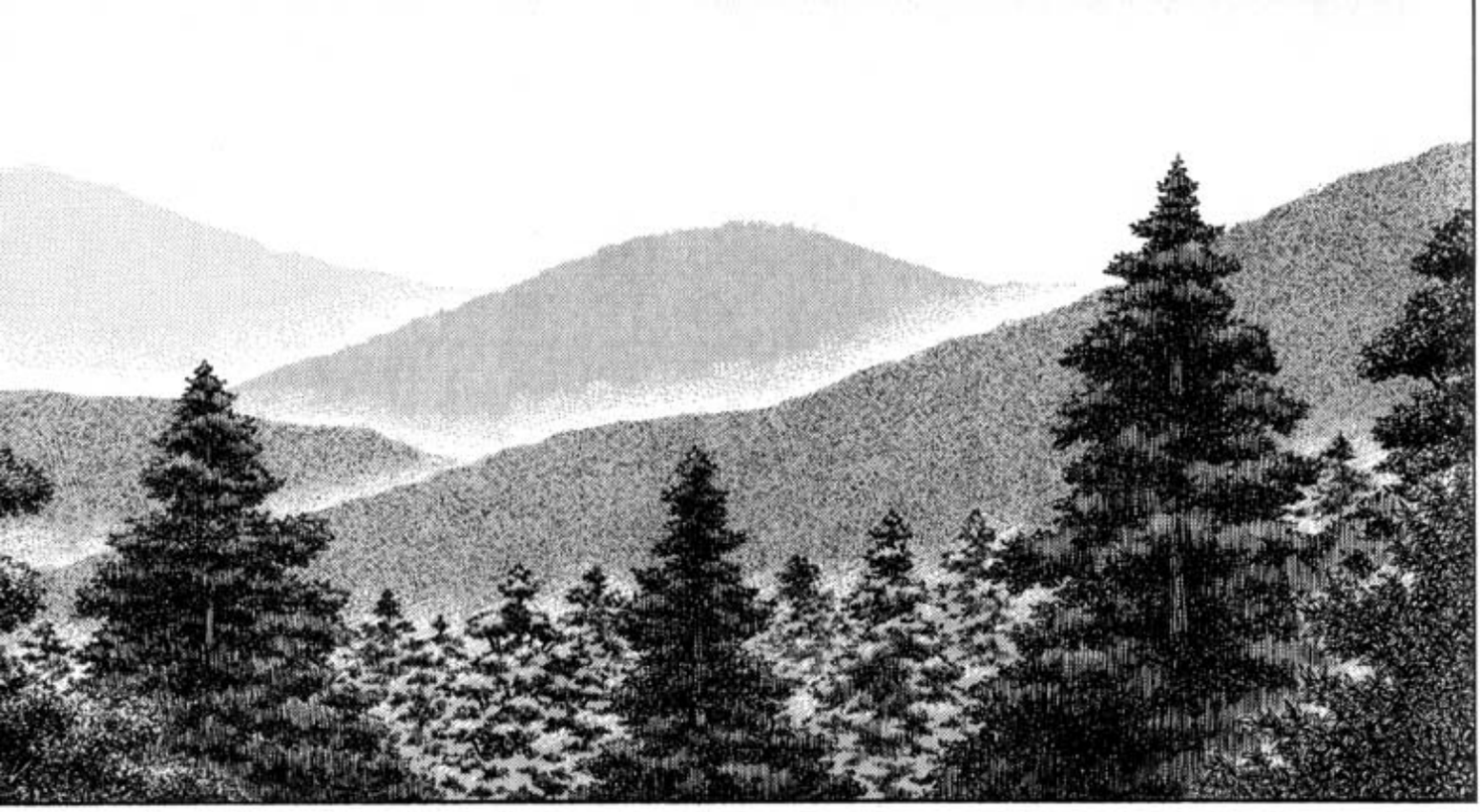

KRICH
KRICH

GLUG
GLUG
GLUG


OLD MAN...

HMM...

NEXT TIME YOU COME, BRING ME SOME SALT...



MAYBE I'LL WAIT UNTIL IT'S HATCHED.
NO...IT MIGHT NOT BE THERE TOMORROW.

AN EGG...

!!

KRICH

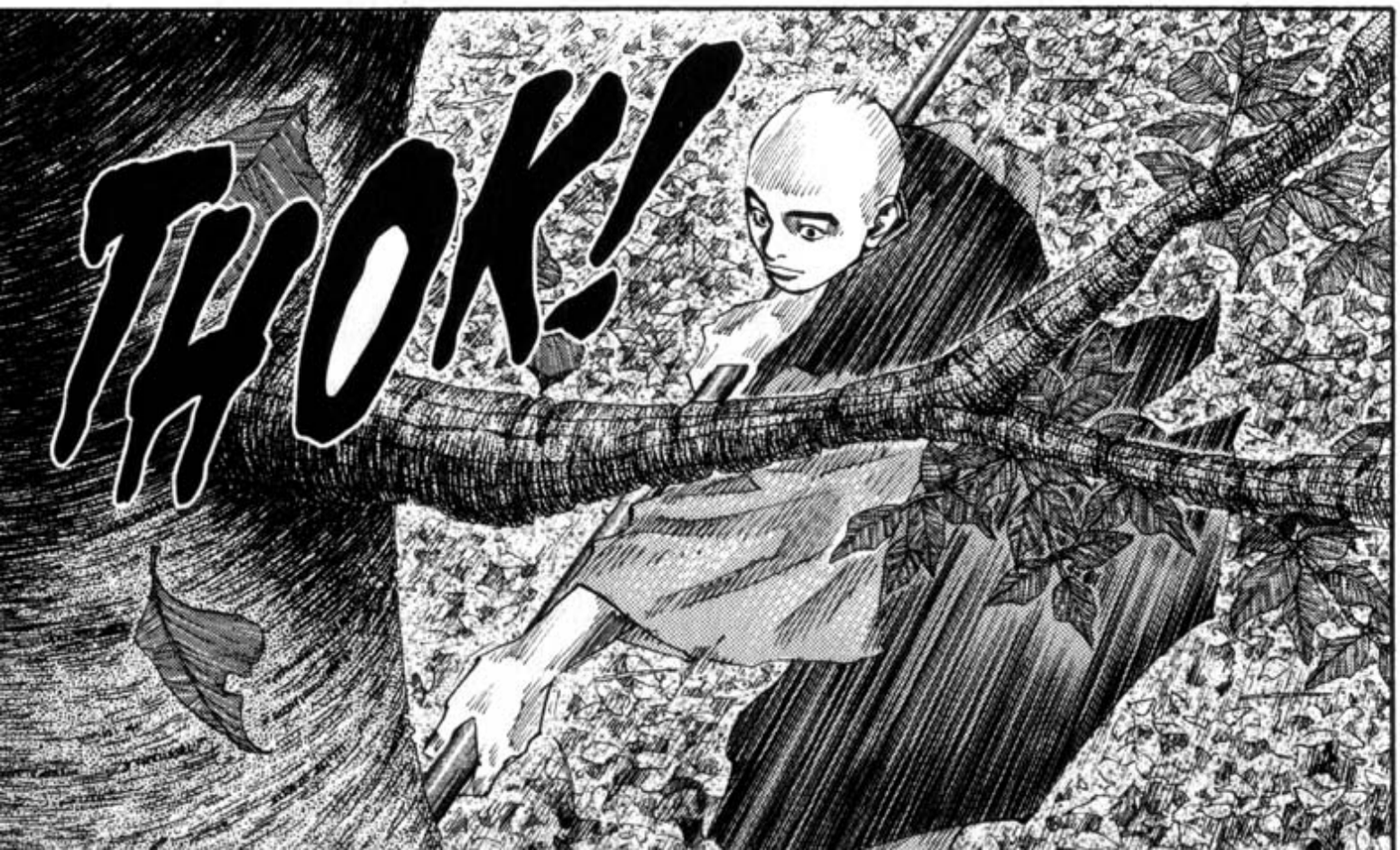
INSHUN!?

THMP
THMP
IS HE LOOKING FOR ME?
THMP
THMP
...
THMP
THMP

THOK!

THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY "SEE."
SEE EVERYTHING IN ITS ENTIRETY...
...EFFORTLESSLY...

THIS TIME, REALLY LOOK AT HIM.
LOOK AT HIM...


THOK!

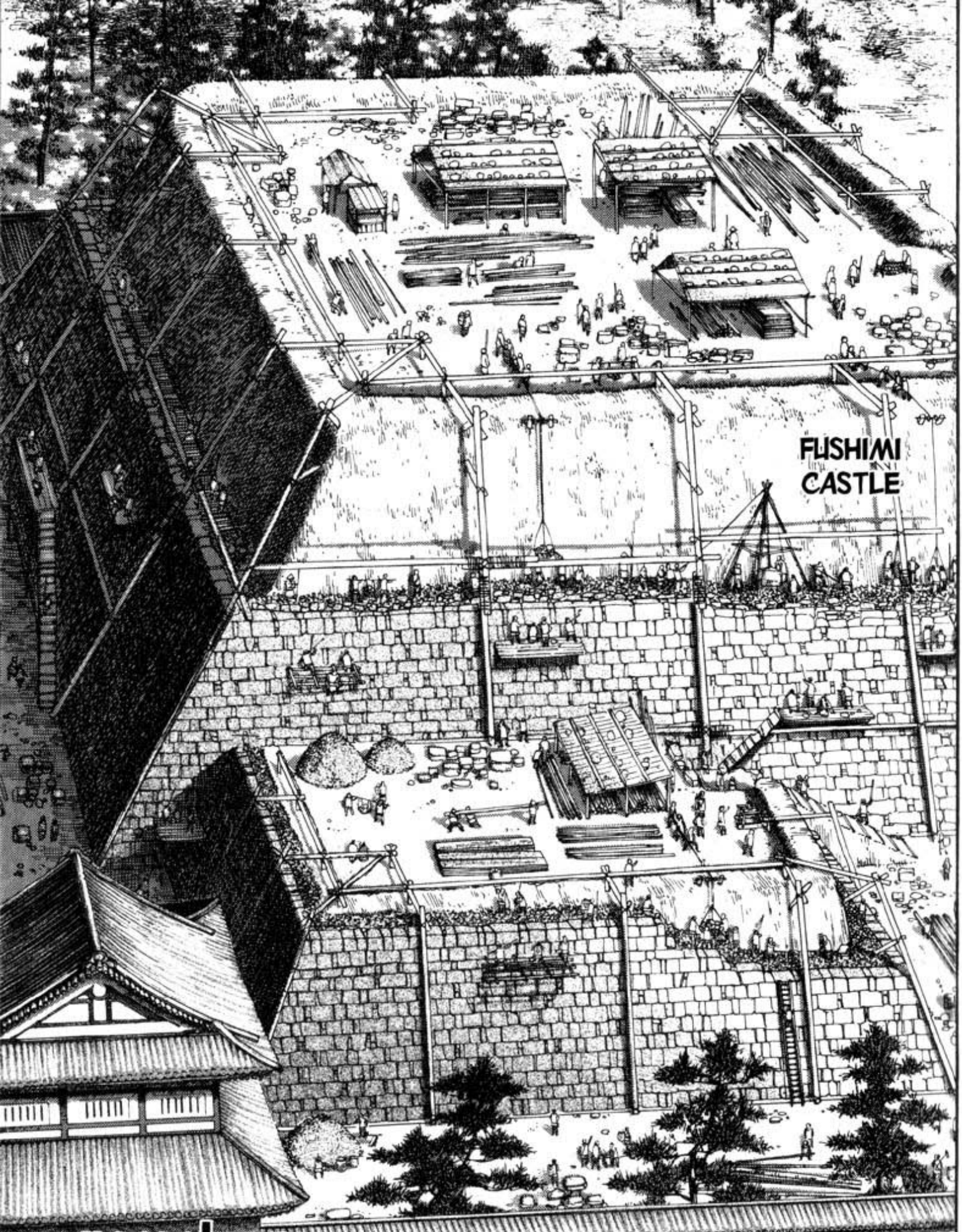
...

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

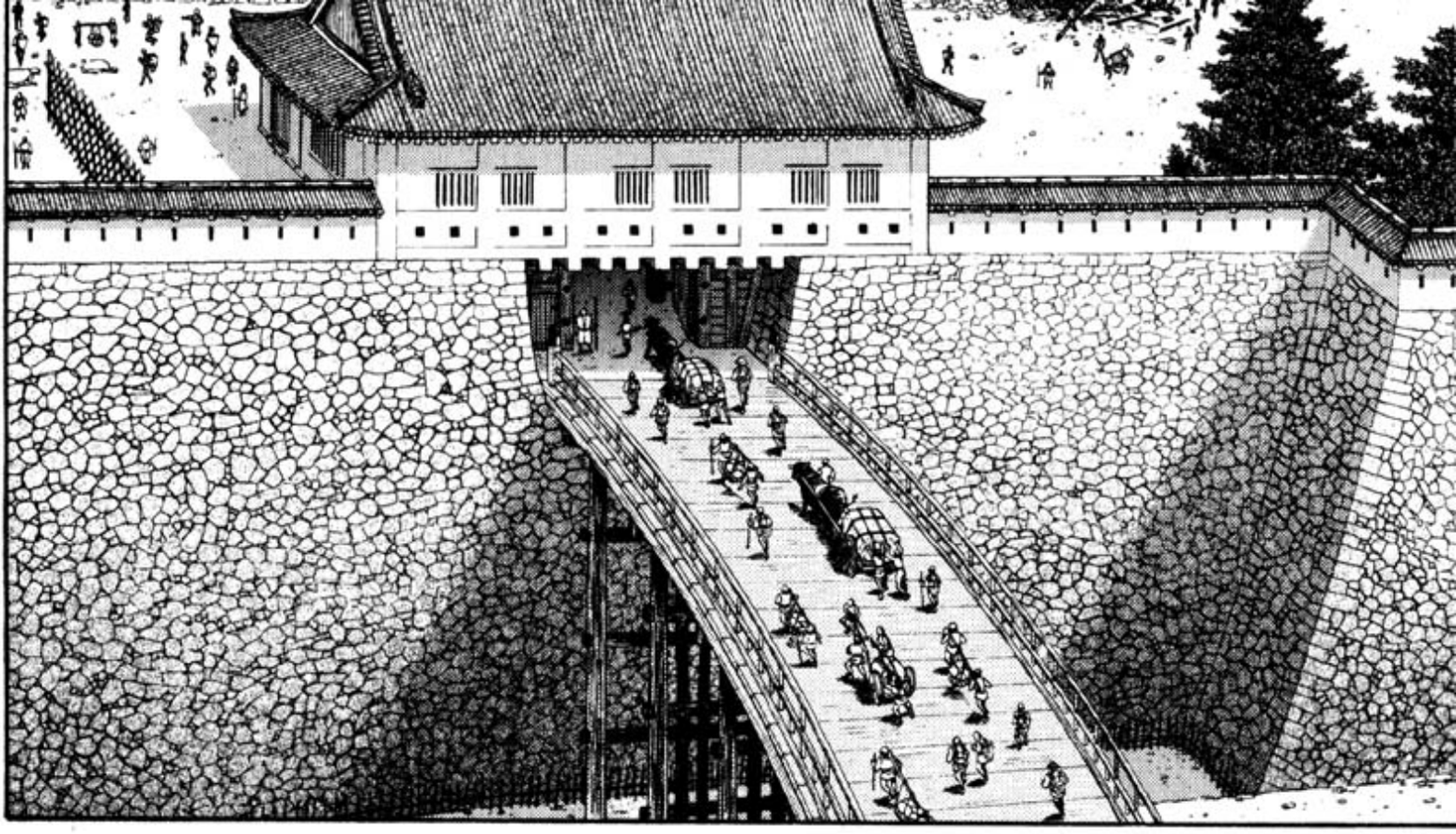
...

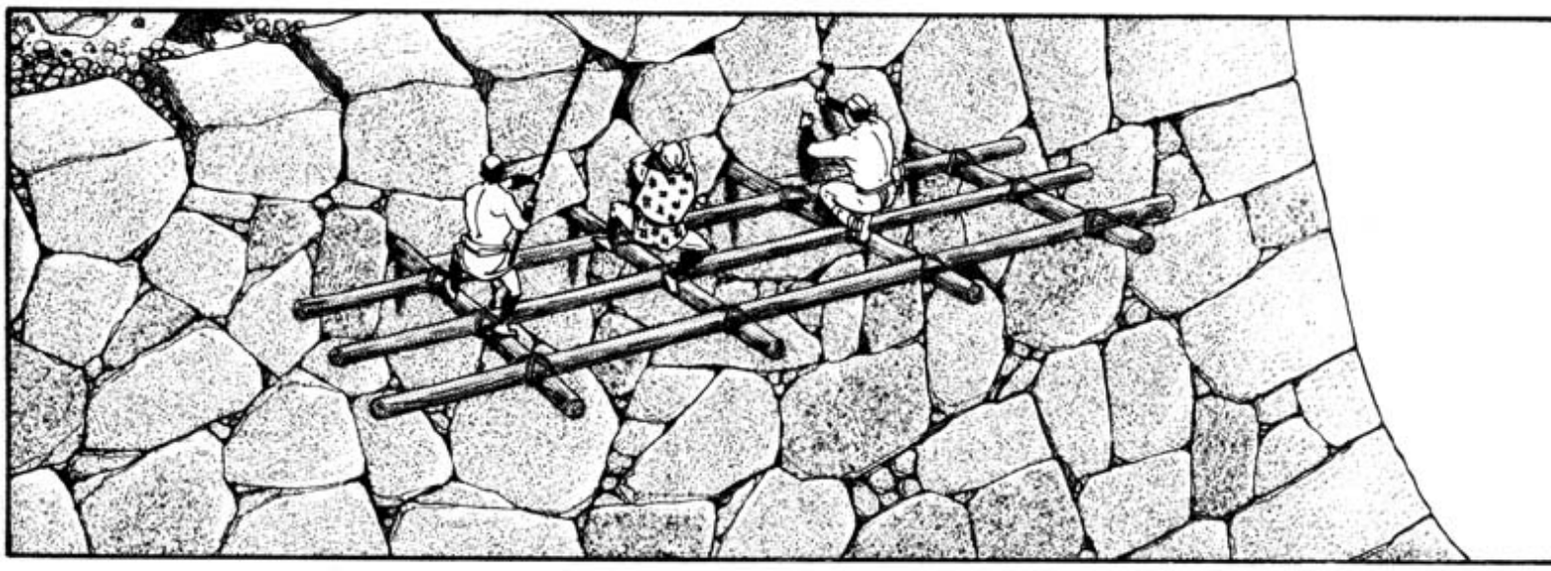
Vagabond

(DAMN! WHAT'S THAT GUY DOING HERE!?)



#55 The Decision of a Formerly Kept Man





I-I CAN'T HELP IT...
KOFF.

HEY!
IT'S TOO EARLY FOR A BREAK!

HAK.
HAK.

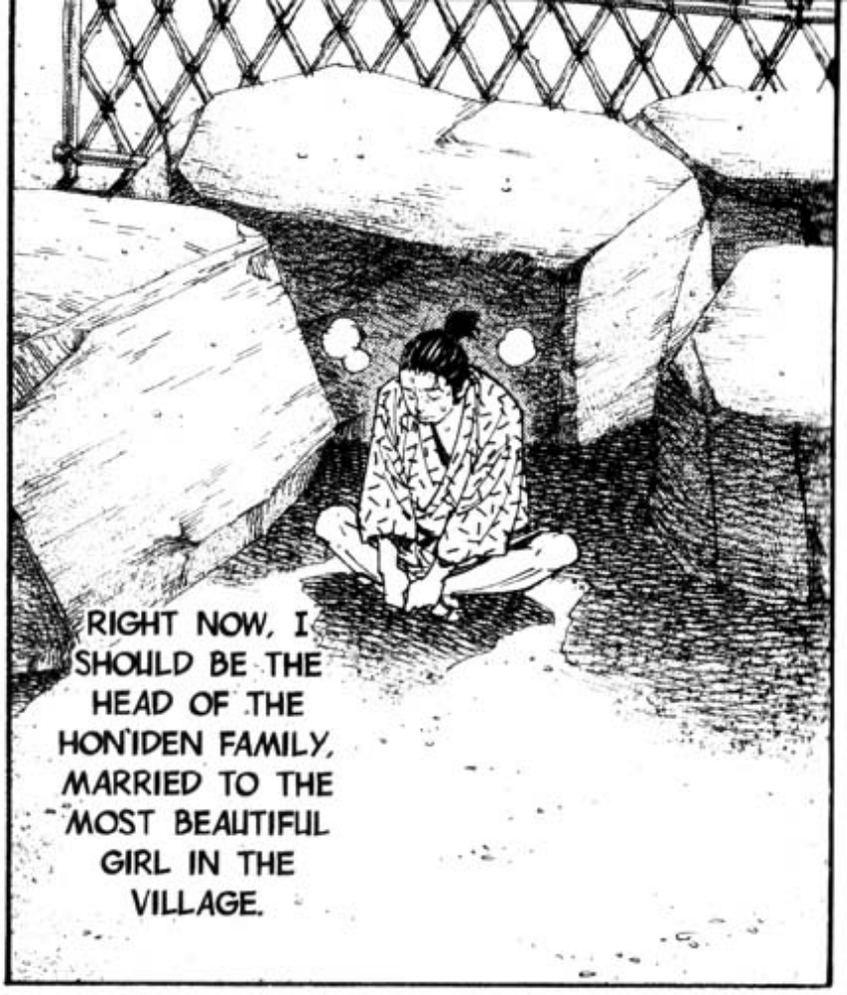
I'M NOT WELL...
HMM...
YOU ARE LOOKING KIND OF PALE!
HEY, MATAHACHI!
QUIT SLACKING OFF!
WATER-MELONS!
WATER-MELONS!
I'LL TAKE ONE...
WATER-MELONS HERE!
I JUST CAN'T TAKE THIS HEAT.
I'LL...
I'LL BE OKAY...
COULDN'T WE TAKE A LITTLE BREAK IN THE AFTERNOON ...?

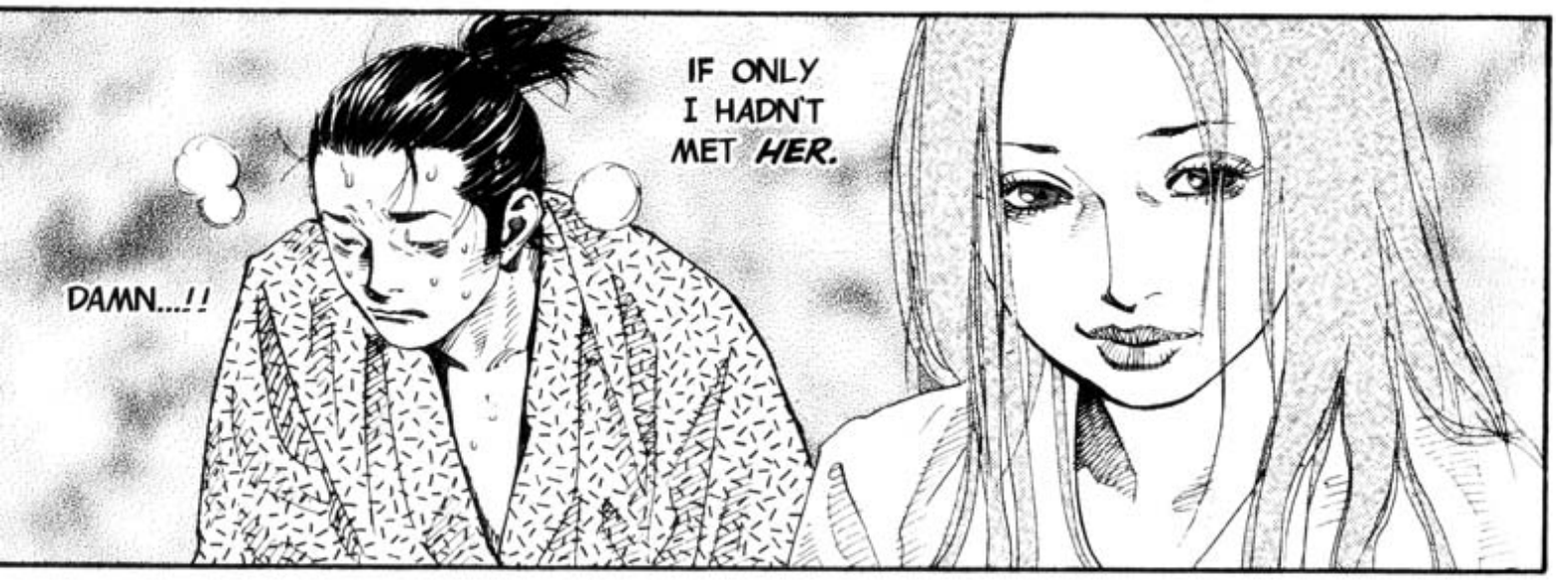
I FEEL BAD FOR EVERYONE...
Y-YOU GUYS SHARE THIS...
HM...
A TACTFUL BRIBE, EH? HEH HEH...

YOU'RE SPINELESS AND WEAK.
...

THRAK

MY LIFE WOULD BE THE ENVY OF EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE.

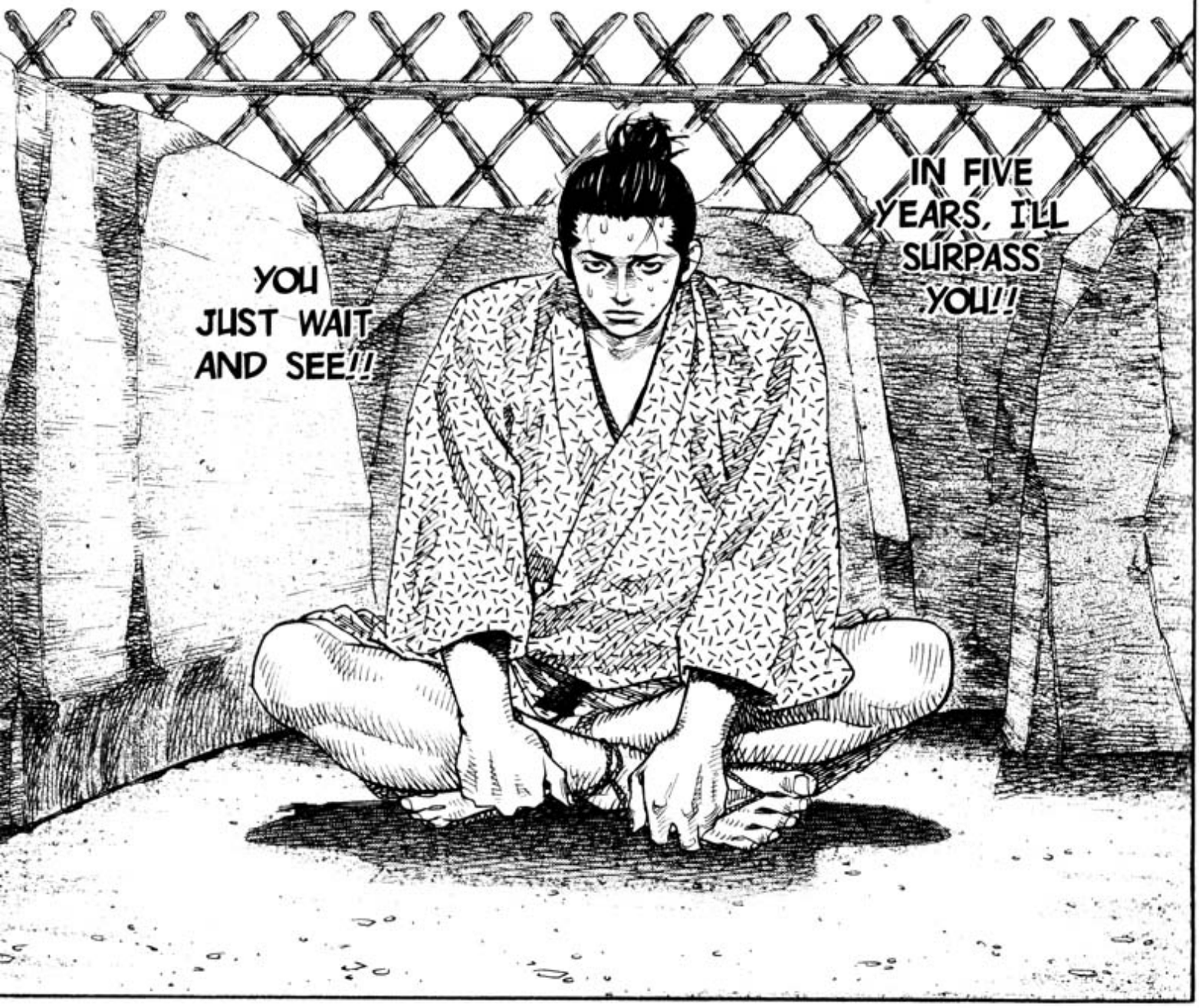

RIGHT NOW, I SHOULD BE THE HEAD OF THE HONIDEN FAMILY, MARRIED TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE VILLAGE.


IF ONLY I HADN'T MET *HER*.
DAMN...!!

I'M GOING TO START ALL OVER AGAIN!!
I'M ONLY 22! IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!

BUT THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST...
I LEFT OKŌ AND I QUIT DRINKING.

I HEARD HE WAS AN EQUAL MATCH TO DENCHICHIRO YOSHIOKA...!!
IS THAT RIGHT!?
WHAT AN AMAZING FIGHTER.
BUT WHO IS HE?
AND THEY SAY HE'S ONLY ABOUT 20 YEARS OLD!!
FIVE YEARS...
...TAKEZŌ.
MIYAMOTO ...
...MUSASHI.
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!


YOU JUST WAIT AND SEE!!
IN FIVE YEARS, I'LL SURPASS YOU!!

I'M SO PATHETIC...
HAK.
I FINALLY FIND A JOB, BUT I CAN'T KEEP UP...

ALL RIGHT.
COME ON.
SORRY, EVERY-ONE.

BREAK TIME'S OVER!!
BACK TO WORK!!

EVER SINCE I WAS 17...
...I'VE LIVED OFF OF OKŌ'S EARNINGS FOR FIVE YEARS...

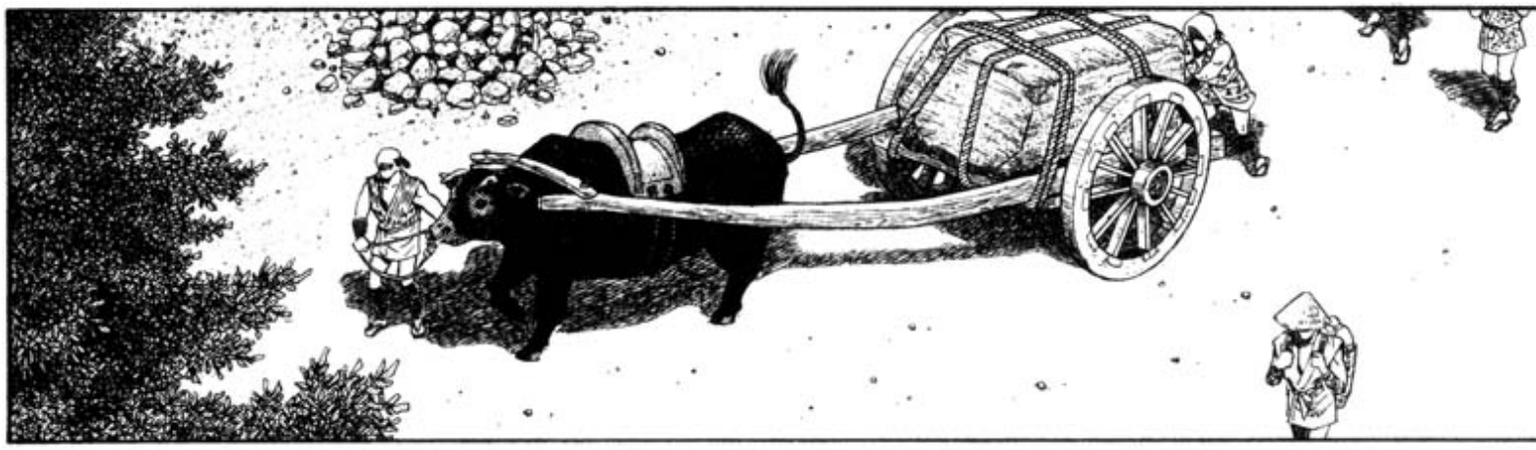
WHAT AM I --!?
NO! I DON'T MISS HER!

THIS HEAT IS TOO MUCH FOR--
UGH!
YOU LOOK AWFUL, WHAT'S WRONG?

HMM... ?
...

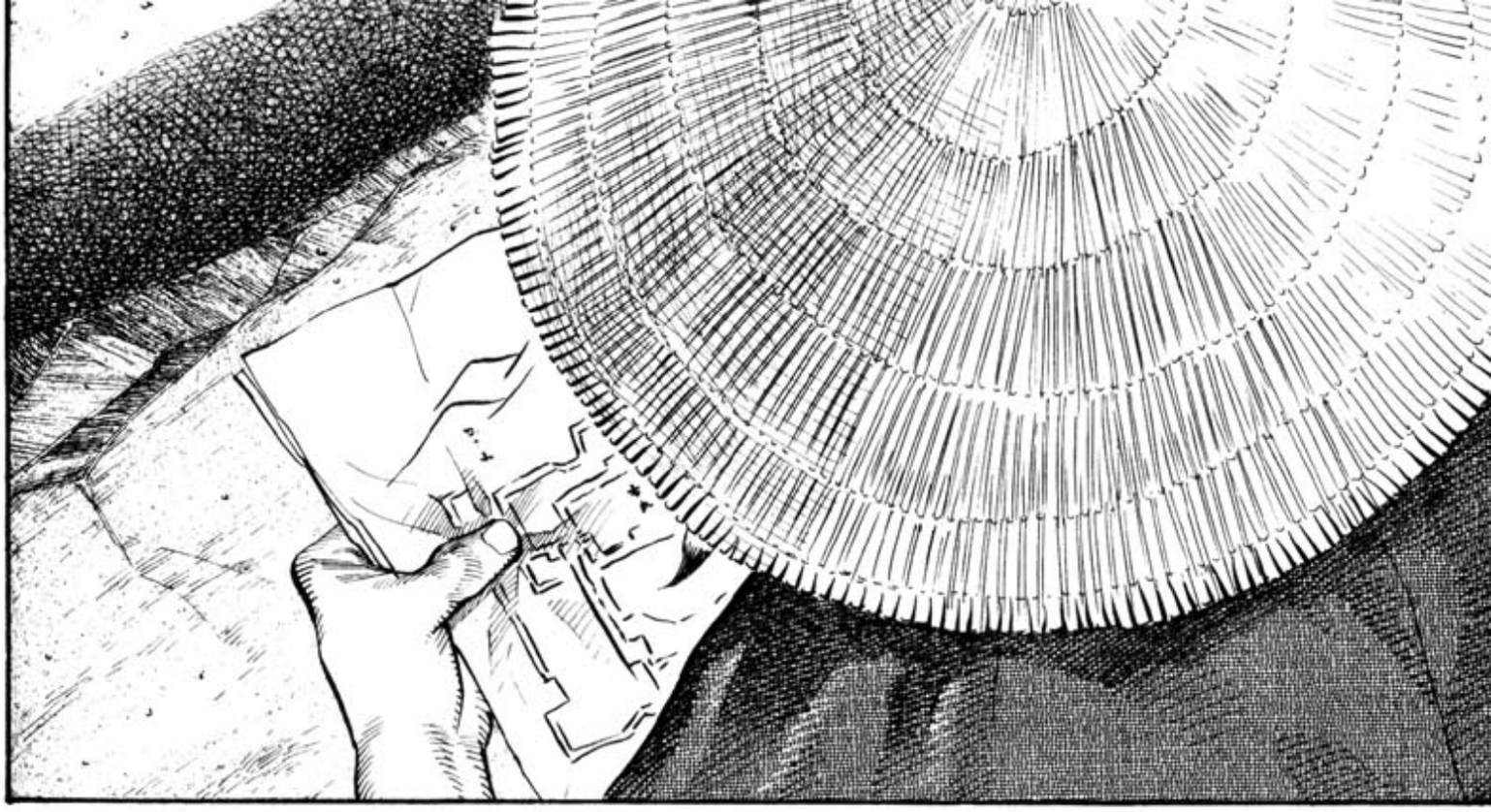
HERE'S SOME MEDICINE.

WRECH! KOFF KOF!
YES, THIS HEAT WAVE IS AWFUL...



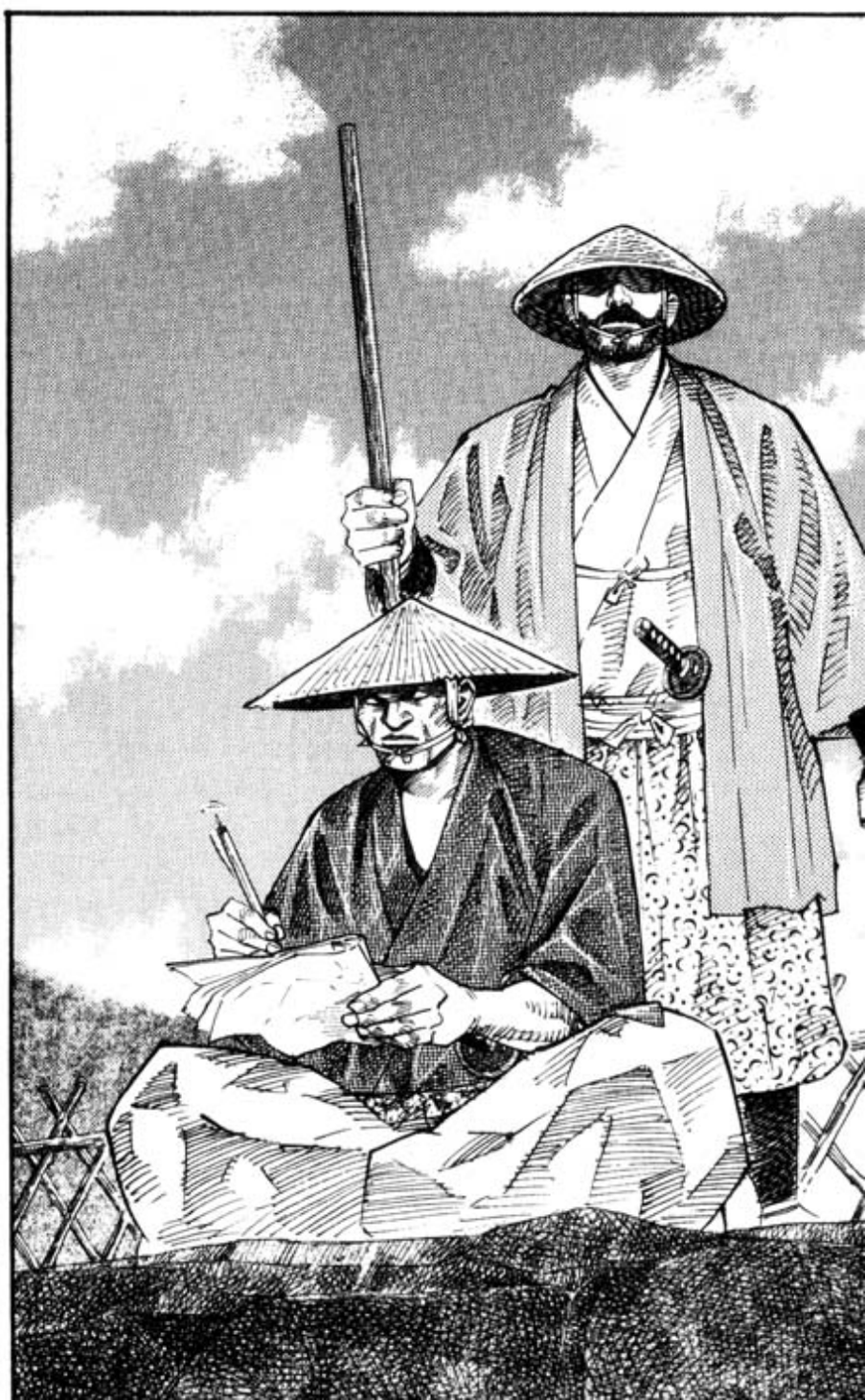
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR.
IT'LL TAKE EFFECT SOON.
YOU SHOULD REST THERE FOR A WHILE LONGER...

TOSS A PEBBLE TO SIGNAL ME.
AND PERHAPS YOU CAN DO ME A FAVOR... GIVE ME A WARNING IF SOMEONE COMES AROUND.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU...

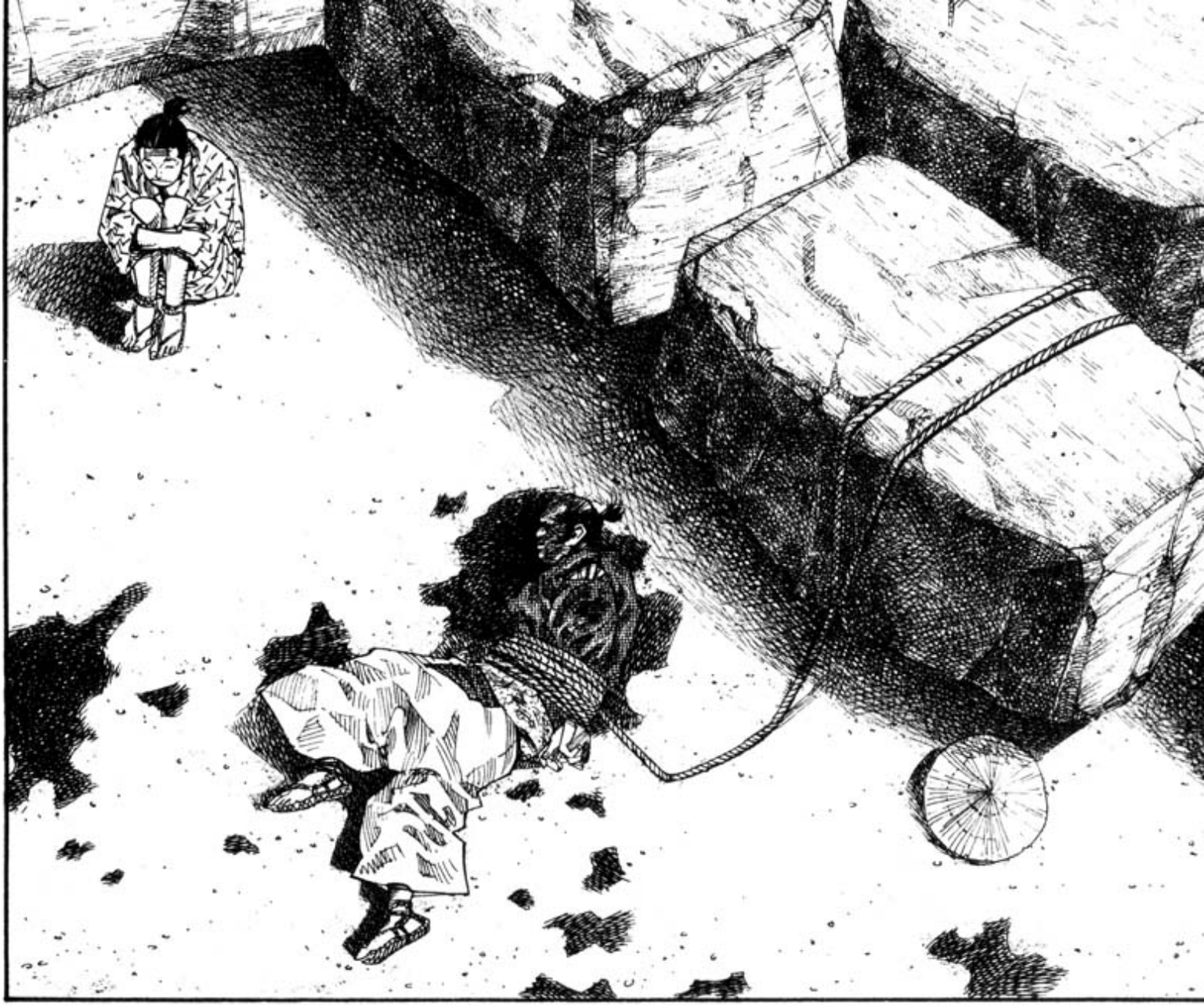


GASP!

OH, NO!
HEY...



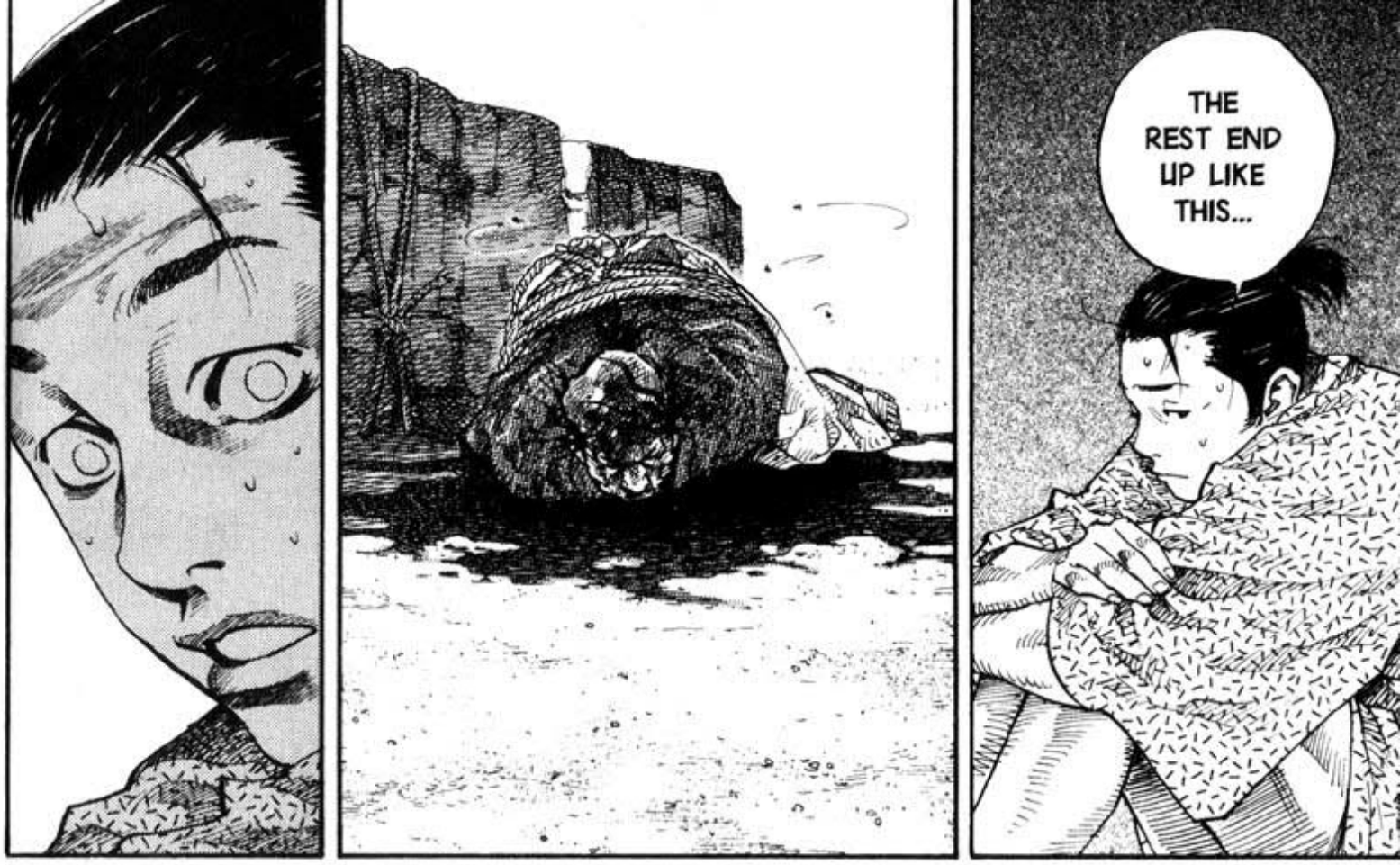
I'M SORRY...
I'M SO SORRY...
I'M AN ERRANT SAMURAI AND SCHOLAR.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH STUDYING GEOGRAPHY AND CONSTRUCTION FOR MY OWN EDIFICATION!?
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON?
AN ENEMY SPY!
FWIP
A TOYOTOMI SPY!!
!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
WHAT, FROM OSAKA!?
THE BASTARD!!
LET'S KILL HIM!!



WE'LL LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES COME.
YOU KEEP WATCH OVER HIM.
DON'T WORRY IF HE ENDS UP DYING.

BZZ
BZZ

BUT HE DID TAKE FIVE MEN DOWN WITH HIM...
HE MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A SKILLED SWORDSMAN...
HE'S DEAD...
LIFE IS TOO FLEETING...
I, MYSELF, HAVE CUT DOWN FOUR BANDITS...
AN ERRANT SAMURAI...
AND ONLY ONE OUT OF TEN THOUSAND...
...CAN HAVE ANY HOPE OF SUCCEEDING...
LEAVING YOUR HOME, YOUR PARENTS...
...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF AMBITION, GOING THROUGH HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULT TRAINING...

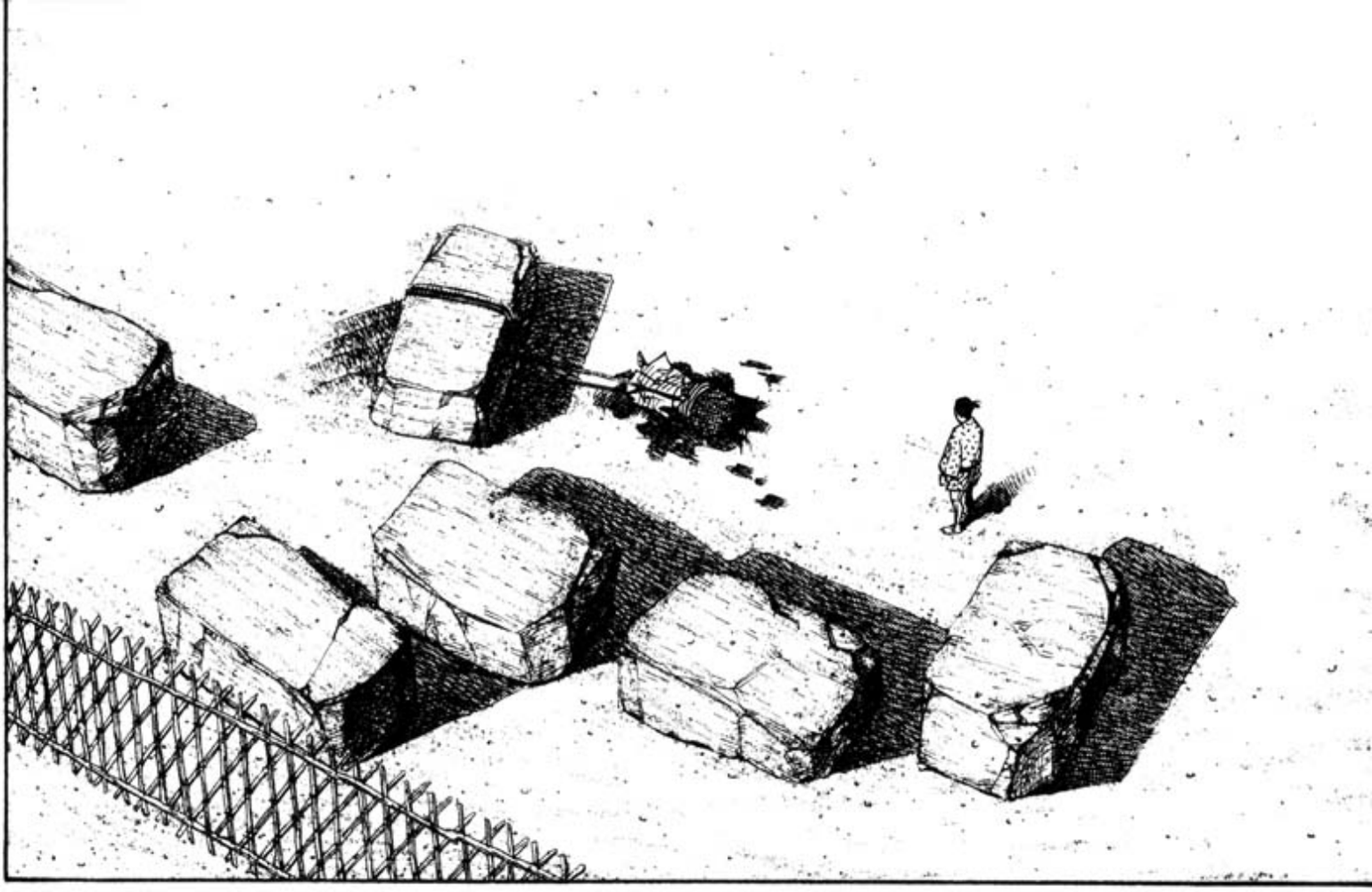

THE REST END UP LIKE THIS...

FWICH
FWICH
!!

FWICH

PLEASE, FORGIVE ME!!
GASP!
I'M--
I'M SORRY !!
PLEASE!!

PLE--
PLEASE...



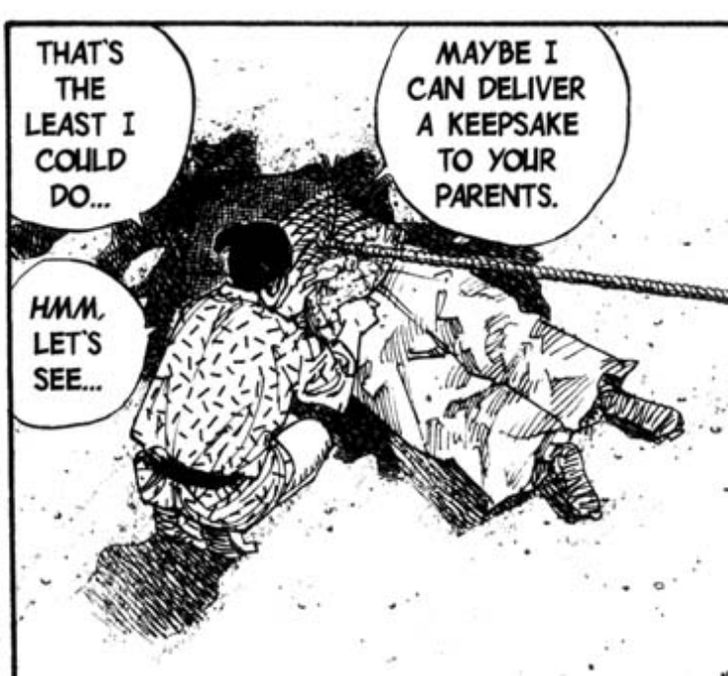
HERE'S SOME MEDI-CINE.
YOU SHOWED ME KINDNESS, BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO FOR YOU NOW...

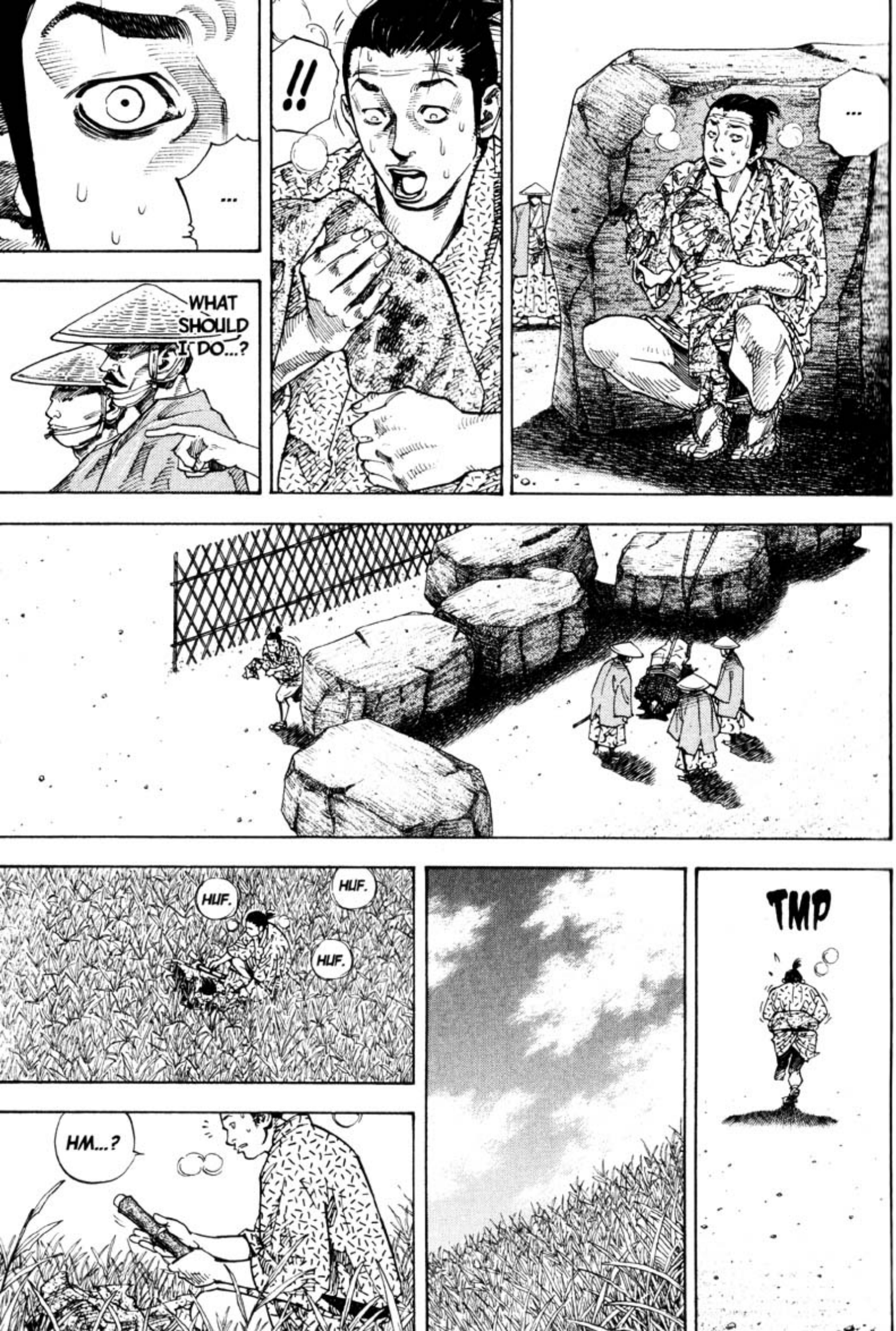
NOW HE'S REALLY DEAD.

...
"PLEASE" ...?

KRICH
KRICH

!!

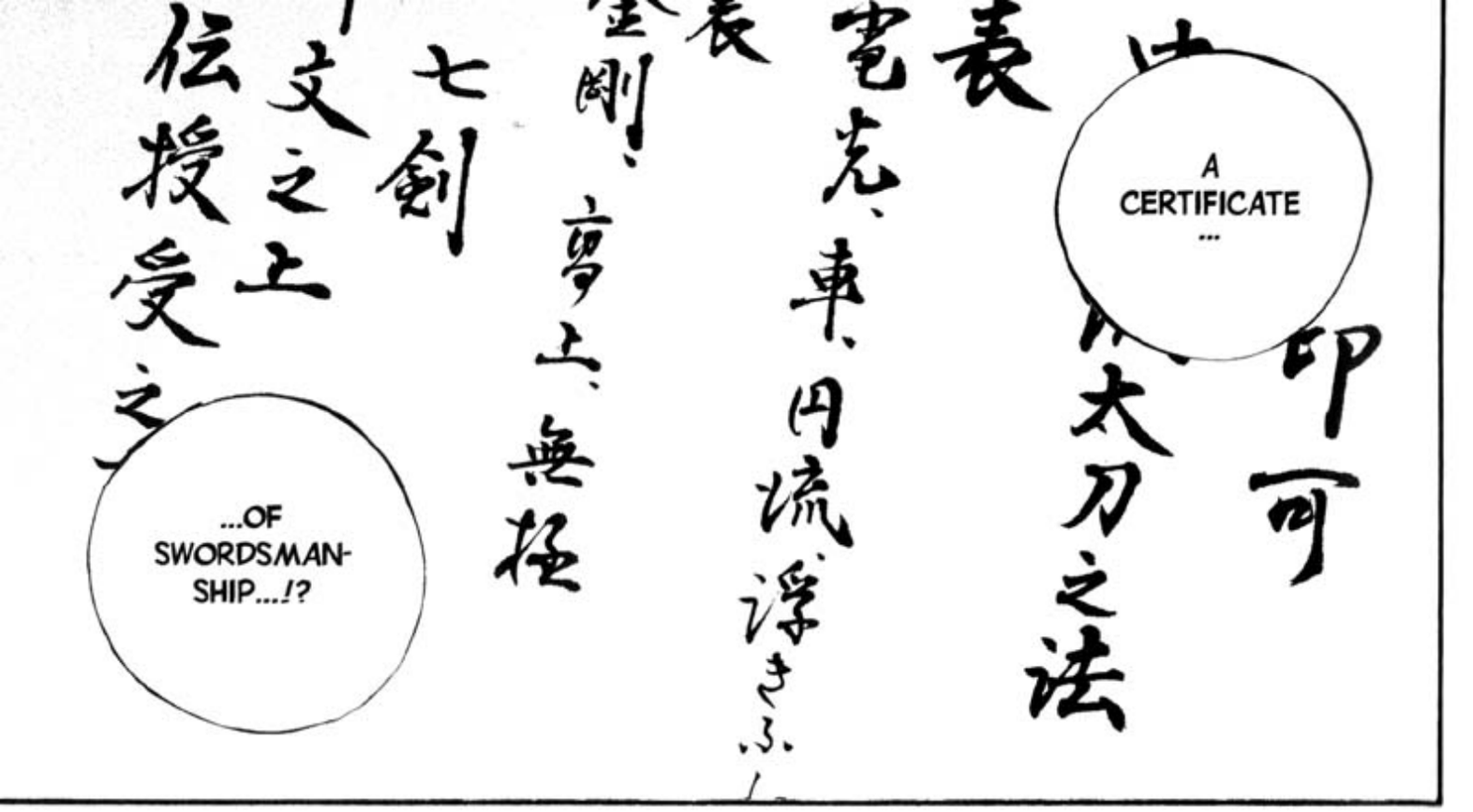

THAT'S THE LEAST I COULD DO...
HMM, LET'S SEE...
MAYBE I CAN DELIVER A KEEPSAKE TO YOUR PARENTS.


...
!!
...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HM...?
TMP

WHAT'S THIS?

(SASAKI KOJIRŌ HAS MASTERED THE FOLLOWING SECRET METHODS OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...)

Vagabond


A CERTIFICATE ...
...OF SWORDSMANSHIP...!?

SO HE WAS SKILLED ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE IN THE CHŪJŌ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...
I KNEW HE WAS FORMIDABLE...

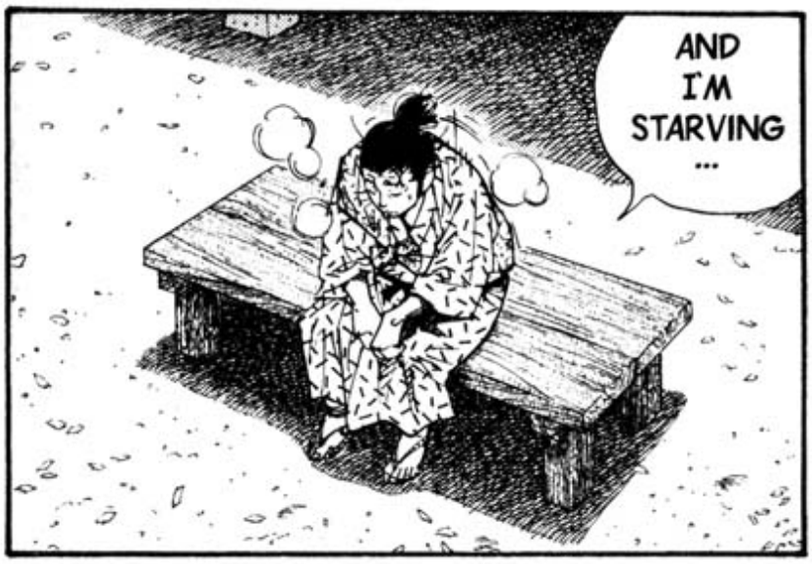
HIS NAME WAS SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
TO BE KILLED OFF LIKE THAT...
IT'S JUST HORRIBLE.
THIS CERTIFICATE IS PROOF OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
I VOW TO DELIVER IT TO YOUR PARENTS.

BUT I SHOULD LEAVE HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WOULDN'T WANT TO BE ARRESTED AS A THIEF.
AND THERE WAS THAT FIRE AT THE YOSHIOKA DŌJŌ...
GOT TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.
...
FWIP
I'LL...
I'LL DELIVER THIS TO HIS PARENTS, AS WELL!!
KLNK
WHOA!
!
FWIP
MAYBE THERE'S SOME OTHER CLUES HERE...
I NEED TO FIND OUT WHERE HE'S FROM...

#56 | Osaka

I'M WASTING MY TIME.
I DON'T HAVE ANY CLUES AND I'M JUST WALKING AROUND AIMLESSLY.

DAMN, I'M EXHAUSTED.

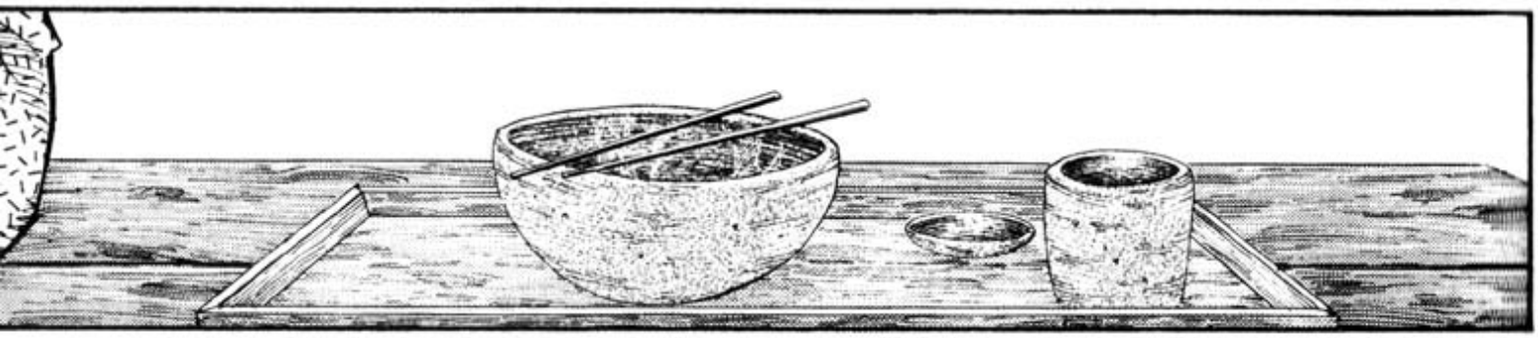

AND I'M STARVING ...

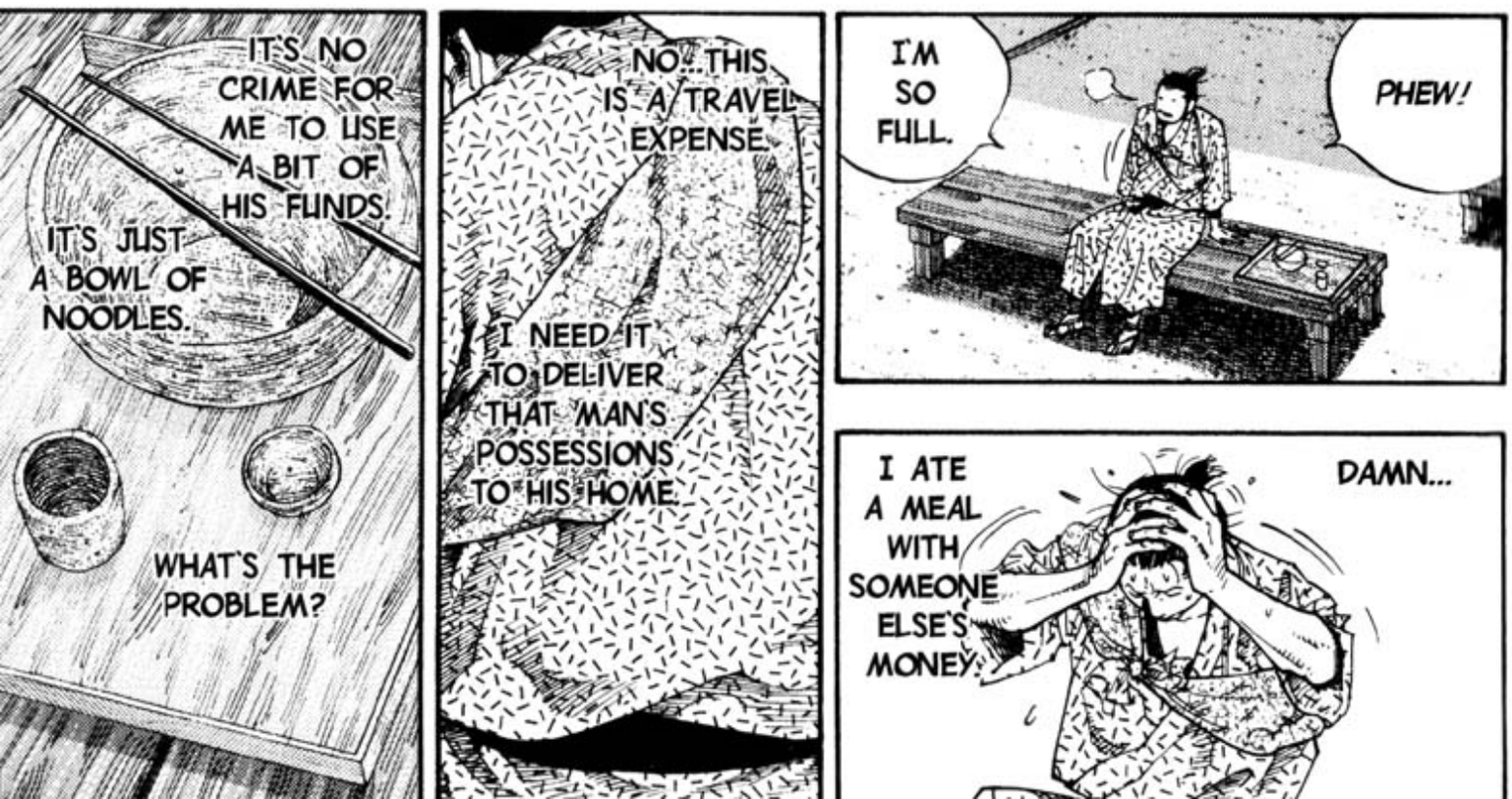
WELCOME.

HM? KANEMAKI JISAI?

THE MASTER OF THE SWORD SCHOOL SHOULD KNOW HIS DISCIPLE'S HOME-TOWN.
I HAVE TO FIND KANEMAKI JISAI...

YOU LOOK AWFUL.
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING?
ARE YOU BROKE?
I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT SINCE YESTERDAY...
...?
WELL, NOT REALLY...
I KNEW IT...
CAN HE REALLY BE THAT REPUTABLE?
NO ONE KNOWS A THING ABOUT HIM.
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE REPUTABLE MASTER OF THE TODA SEIGEN VARIATION OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE.
EVER HEARD OF HIM?
CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.



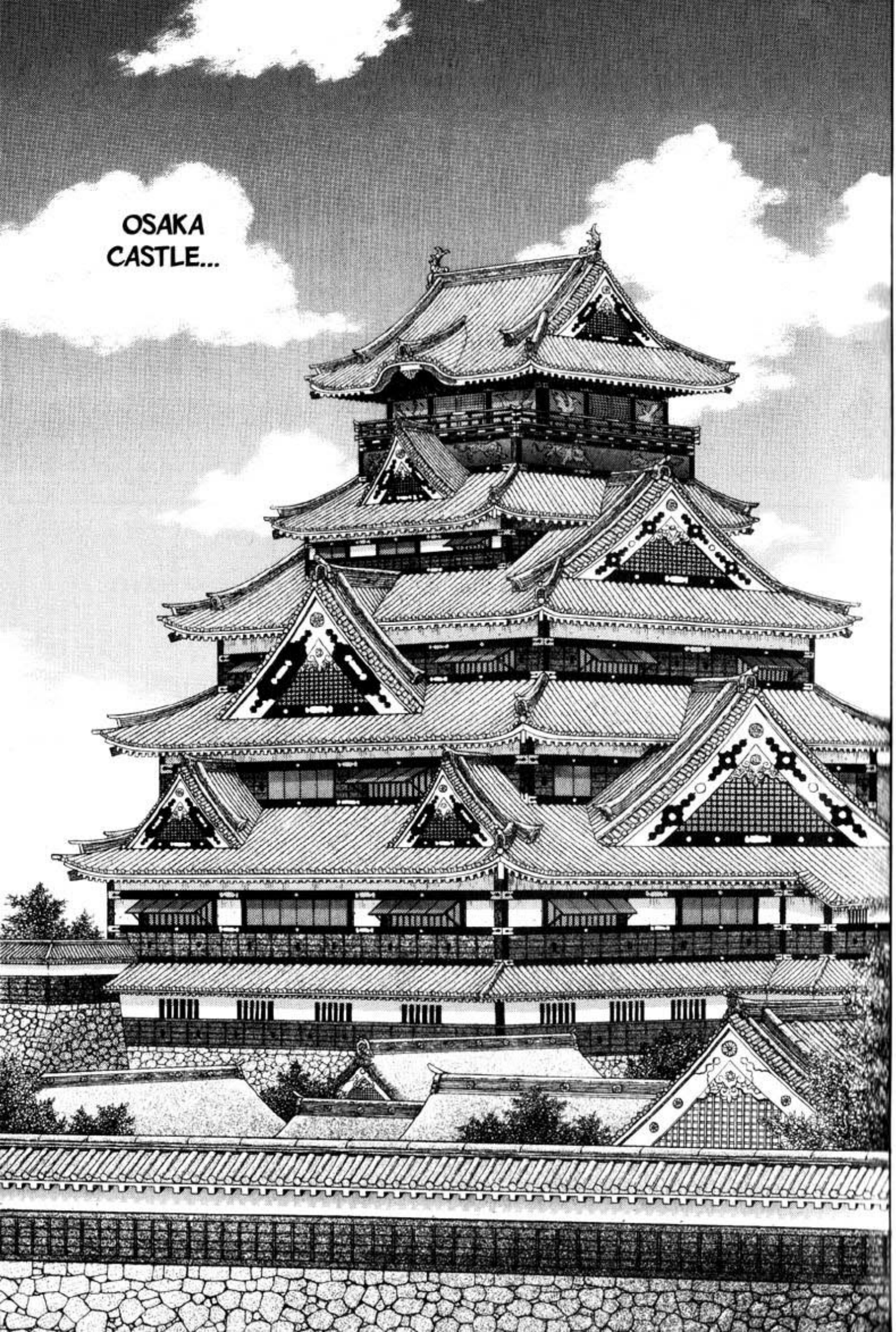

IT'S NO CRIME FOR ME TO USE A BIT OF HIS FUNDS.
IT'S JUST A BOWL OF NOODLES.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
NO... THIS IS A TRAVEL EXPENSE.
I NEED IT TO DELIVER THAT MAN'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS HOME.
I'M SO FULL.
PHEW!
I ATE A MEAL WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY.
DAMN...

I, TOO, WANTED TO WITNESS HIS SWORDSMAN-SHIP, FIRSTHAND...
I CONTINUED TO SEEK HIM OUT UNTIL I HEARD THAT HE RETIRED TO A REMOTE VILLAGE, TO PASS HIS OLD AGE IN HERMETIC OBSCURITY.

IF IT'S KANEMAKI JISAI YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...
I THINK YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME...
HUH?

HE'S THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN. PERHAPS HE'LL HAVE SOME INFORMATION.
BUT IF YOU STILL WISH TO FIND HIM...
...I SUGGEST YOU GO TO OSAKA CASTLE AND FIND A MAN NAMED TODA MONDONOSHŌ.

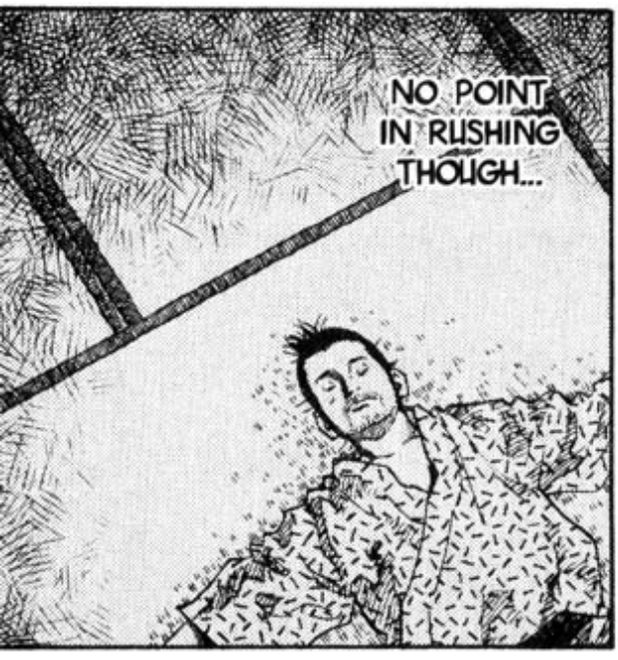
OSAKA!


OSAKA
CASTLE...

WHUMP
PHEW! I'M EXHAUSTED ...
YES, OF COURSE...
TODA MONDONOSHŌ ...
FWOM
I KEEP HAVING TO TRAVEL FARTHER AND FARTHER...
E--
ECHIZEN ...!?
WHO USED TO TEACH SOME OF THE SAMURAI IN THE CASTLE.
THE GRANDSON OF TODA SEIGEN...
IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT KANEMAKI JISAI THEN YOU MIGHT BE BETTER OFF LOOKING FOR ITŌ ITTŌSAI.
HE'S THE FOUNDER OF THE ITTŌ RYŪ STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP. EVEN I KNOW THAT.
WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT?
USED TO TEACH?
THAT'S RIGHT. HE RETURNED TO ECHIZEN SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

!!!!
ITTŌSAI STUDIED UNDER KANEMAKI JISAI.
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT?

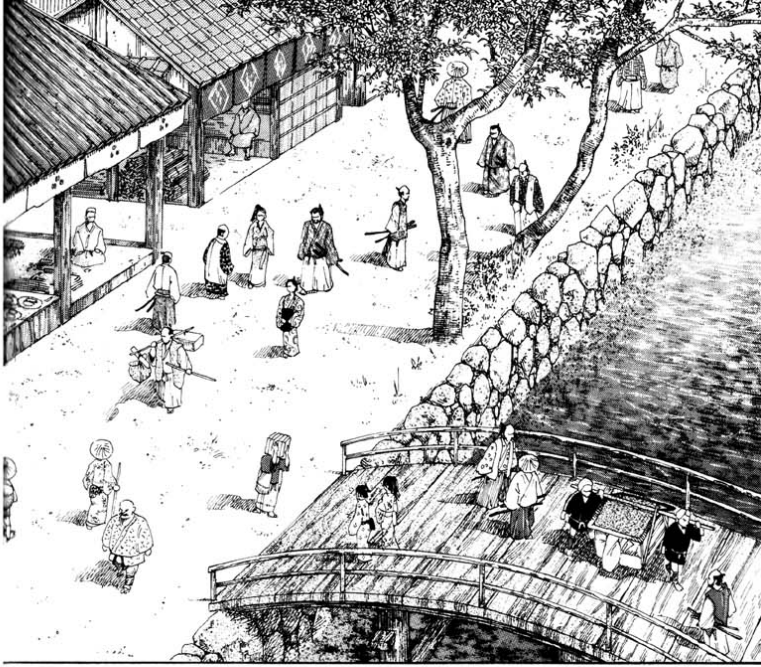
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO...?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...


NO POINT IN RUSHING THOUGH...

I'M NEVER GOING TO FIND ANY OF THEM.

HOWEVER...
ITŌ ITTŌSAI WAS LAST KNOWN TO HAVE RETIRED IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHIRAKAWA.
BUT FROM THERE, HE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.

ZZZ
ZZZ



REALLY!?
TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF.

AND THEY'RE GOING TO DISPLAY THEIR LOYALTY TO HIDEYOSHI.
APPARENTLY, OVER SEVEN HUNDRED RONIN WITH THAT CONVICTION HAVE GATHERED HERE.

TOKUGAWA MIGHT RULE THE COUNTRY NOW...
BUT THEY SAY OSAKA CASTLE IS SECRETLY ASSEMBLING A TROOP OF RONIN...
THEY'RE PREPARING FOR BATTLE...

SURE ARE A LOT OF RONIN IN OSAKA.
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A DEMAND FOR THEM HERE.

KRICH
KRICH
THAT'S THE CHIEF OF THE KYŌBASHI ENTRANCE TO OSAKA CASTLE.
KRICH

I WAS LUGGING STONES AT FUSHIMI CASTLE JUST THE OTHER DAY...
THAT'S NO DIFFER-ENT FROM ME!

WHEN THEY WERE DREDGING THE JUNKEI MOAT, HE WAS JUST ANOTHER RŌNIN...
...HAULING DIRT.
REALLY ...!?

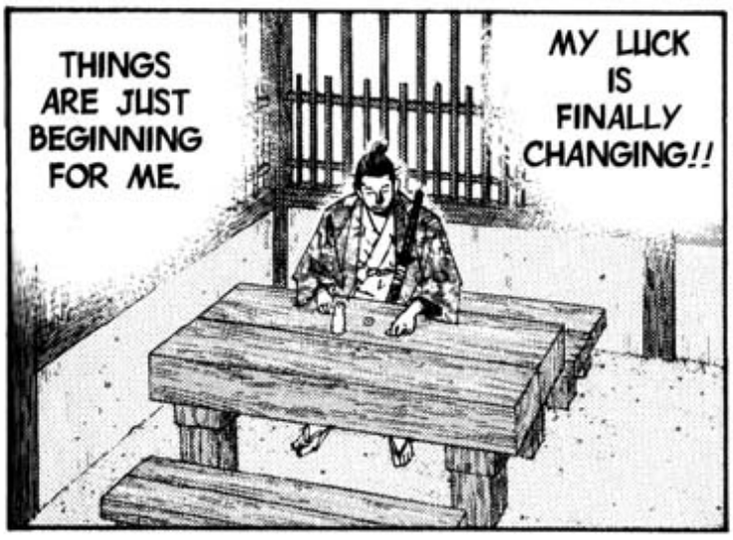
I CAN DO IT!!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF MYSELF.

THIS IS IT...!!

FWICH
呉服物品々

KLNK
BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT LEFT...

COME AGAIN, SIR!
SORRY, KOJIRŌ...I SPENT SOME MORE OF YOUR MONEY.


THINGS ARE JUST BEGINNING FOR ME.
MY LUCK IS FINALLY CHANGING!!

FWIP
AH, DOESN'T MATTER. A MAN WITH AMBITION HAS TO HAVE A DRINK, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
DELICIOUS!

FIP
PHEW.

HEY, DIDN'T I QUIT DRINKING ...?

FWIP

...

YOU DRINK YOUR SAKE WITH SUCH RELISH...
SMIRK
PARDON MY RUDENESS!
CAN I HELP YOU?
HUH ...?
HOW ABOUT JOINING ME FOR A DRINK?
...WHILE YOU WAIT FOR YOURS?
HEY, WAITER! WHERE'S MY BOTTLE!?
WHY, THANK YOU.

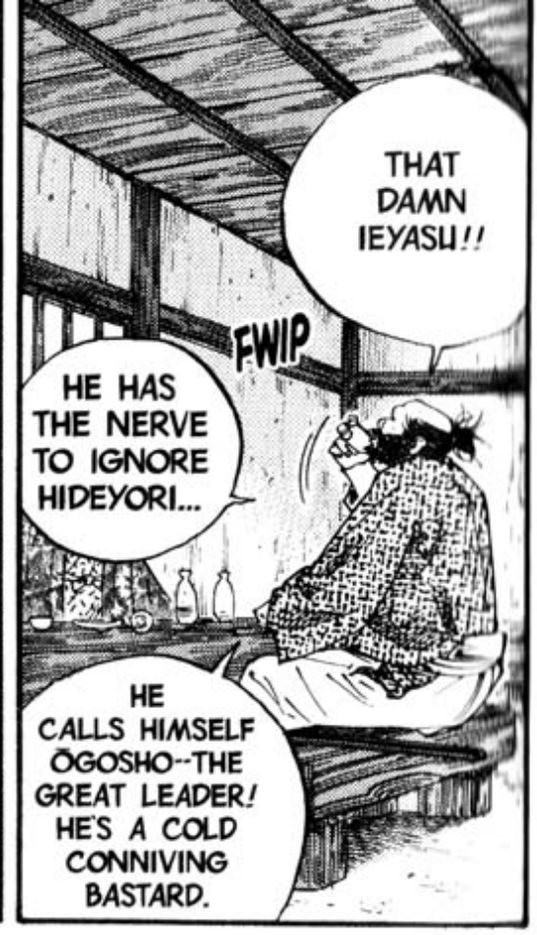
HE SURE CAN DRINK A LOT...
HE MUST BE A RŌNIN, TOO...
NOW, *THIS* IS A BOLD MAN.

TAKEZŌ COULDN'T DRINK AT ALL.
PHEW! I DRANK TOO MUCH.

YOU'LL SEE, TAKEZŌ!!
IN OSAKA!!

I WONDER IF HE'S STILL IN NARA...?
I'LL MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF HERE...

HEY...
...IF THERE WAS A WAR RIGHT NOW, WHICH SIDE WOULD YOU FIGHT ON?


THAT DAMN IEYASU!!
FWIP
HE HAS THE NERVE TO IGNORE HIDEYORI...
HE CALLS HIMSELF ŌGOSHO--THE GREAT LEADER! HE'S A COLD CONNIVING BASTARD.

OSAKA...

AND SO WHAT FIEF ARE YOU FROM?
OH, HOW RUDE OF ME... PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...

TUGG
MY BROTHER!!

I AM AKAKABE YASOMA, RŌNIN FROM GAMŌ.

UH...
HUH?
HUH?
HE IS A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE.
FWOM
SURELY, YOU'VE HEARD OF BAN DAN'EMON?

I'VE MET HIM ON THREE OR FOUR OCCASIONS.

ALSO, SUSUKIDA HAYATO KANESUKE, THE DISTINGUISHED OFFICER AT OSAKA CASTLE!!
WE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE LAND TOGETHER BACK IN OUR WANDERING DAYS.
AND THEN THERE'S ŌNO SHURINOSUKE !!

UM...
AND YOU?

THE CHŪJŌ-RYŪ.
...
HE'S FROM JŌKYŌJI VILLAGE IN ISAKA-NO-SHŌ IN THE PROVINCE OF ECHIZEN. HE'S THE MASTER OF THE--
YOU MUST HAVE HEARD OF...
TODA SEIGEN...
...
HE IN-CORPORATED THE CHŪJŌ STYLE INTO HIS OWN.
YOU MUST ALSO HAVE HEARD OF MASTER KANEMAKI JISAI...
THEN SURELY...
WELL...
KANEMAKI JISAI...SOUNDS FAMILIAR, BUT MAYBE NOT...
AND YOU ARE...?
SO YOU STUDY SWORDS-MANSHIP?
THAT'S RIGHT.

KANEMAKI JISAI'S DISCIPLE, SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

!?

...I'M THE MAN DELIVERING SASAKI'S POSSESSIONS TO HIS FAMILY, THAT IS TO SAY.

Vagabond

酒の似合う男

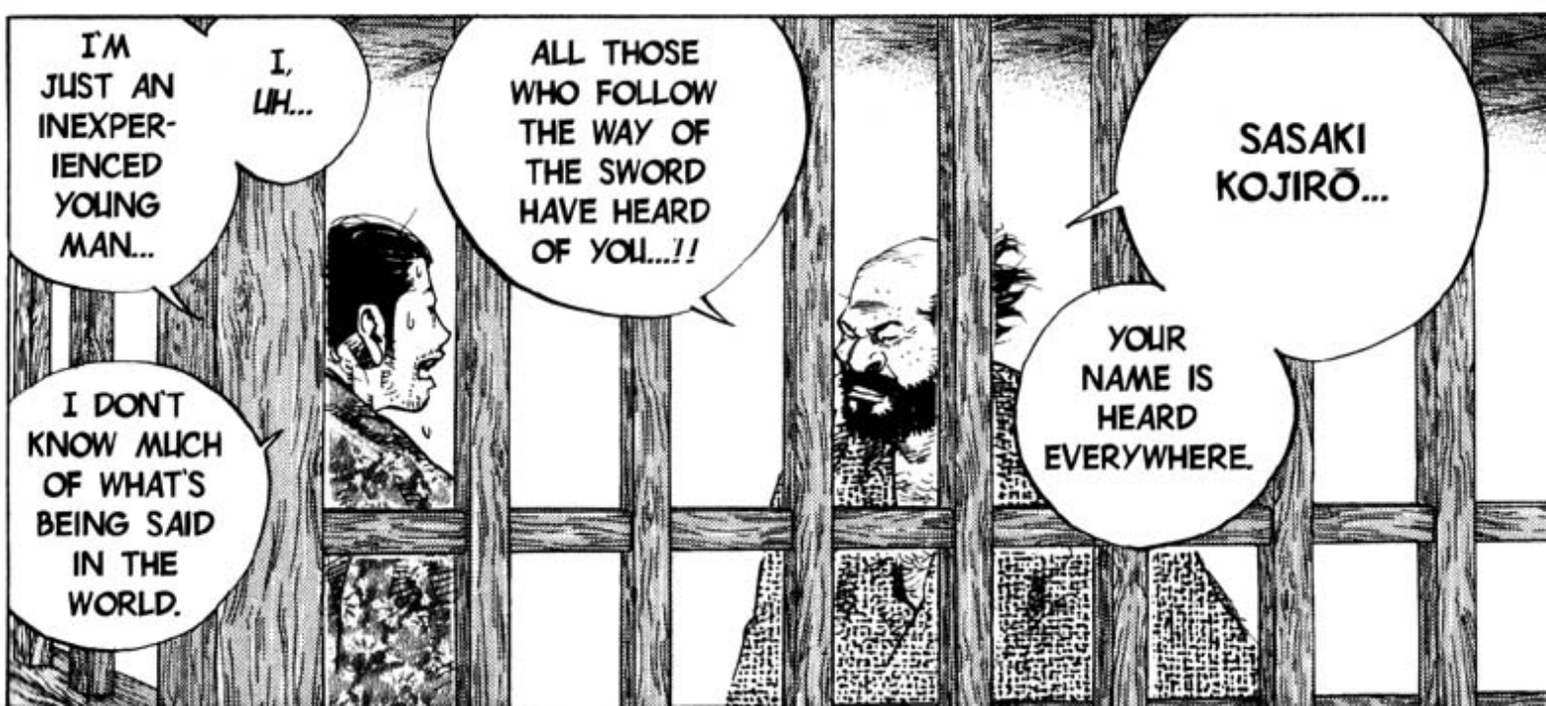
(A MAN WHO LOOKS GOOD DRINKING LIQUOR.)

#57 Vermin

UH...
FORGIVE ME!!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ, I HAD NO IDEA WHO YOU WERE... AND HERE I AM BOASTING AND SHOOTING MY MOUTH OFF...!!
I APOLOGIZE FOR MY INSOLENCE!

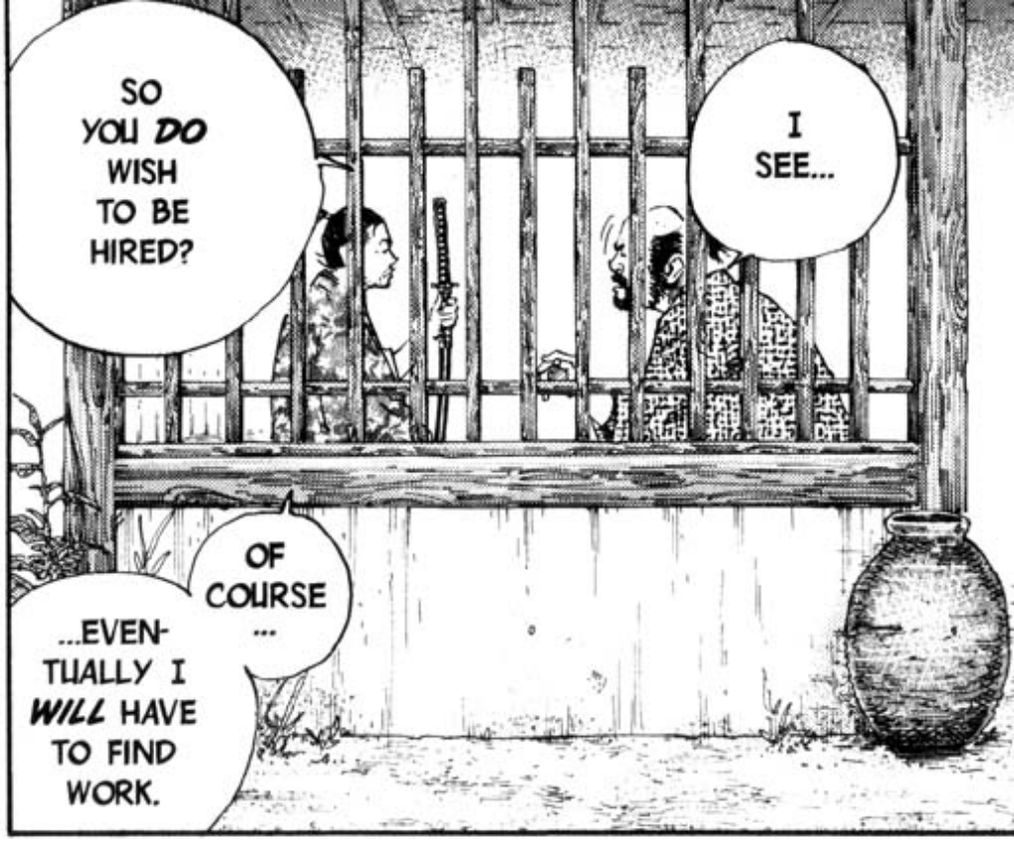
UMM...
WHAT?

IS THE NAME SO WELL-KNOWN?


I'M JUST AN INEXPERIENCED YOUNG MAN...
I, UH...
ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE SWORD HAVE HEARD OF YOU...!!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF WHAT'S BEING SAID IN THE WORLD.
YOUR NAME IS HEARD EVERYWHERE.

AND YET YOU ARE STILL UNEMPLOYED ?
THERE MUST BE PLENTY OF LORDS WHO'D HIRE YOU IMMEDIATELY.
NOW, WHAT DO I DO...?
AH... IT IS OFTEN SO FOR THOSE WITH TALENT...
YOUR MODESTY DOES NOTHING TO HIDE YOUR ABILITIES.
AN OUTCAST ?
UH-OH...
WELL, YOU SEE... FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS...
...I'VE BEEN SORT OF AN OUTCAST.
I MEAN, I'VE BEEN DEDICATING MY LIFE TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.

OF COURSE ...
...A MAN WITH YOUR TALENTS..


SO YOU DO WISH TO BE HIRED?
I SEE...
OF COURSE ...
...EVEN-TUALLY I WILL HAVE TO FIND WORK.

ALLOW ME TO HELP YOU!
FWIP

HA HA HA
DEE DA DA

...

HM?
I'M SURE I WON'T BE PAID MUCH, INITIALLY.

THE MORE ABILITY YOU HAVE, THE MORE BOLD YOU SHOULD BE.
LET'S SEE...WE'LL ASK THEM FOR FIVE-HUNDRED KOKU.
ACTUALLY, I'M HONIDEN MATAHACHI.
...
DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT!
THAT'S NO GOOD, SASAKI!!
YOU'RE THE MIGHTY SASAKI KOJIRO!!

HA
HA
HA
HA
AND THIS IS AN ADVANCE CELEBRATION !!
DRINK UP!

FIVE-HUNDRED ...

THAT'S SUSUKIDA'S ESTATE.

WHEN HE WAS THIRTY, NO ONE HAD EVER HEARD OF SUSUKIDA KANESUKE...
BUT NOW, ALL THAT'S CHANGED...
...
HOW EXTRAVAGANT.
...
HE'S REALLY MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF!!
THIS IS...
...OSAKA.
I'LL MAKE IT TOO, EVENTUALLY...!!

ALL RIGHT THEN, I'LL GO TELL HIM ABOUT YOU!
KRICH
OH...
I'LL NEED THAT MONEY.

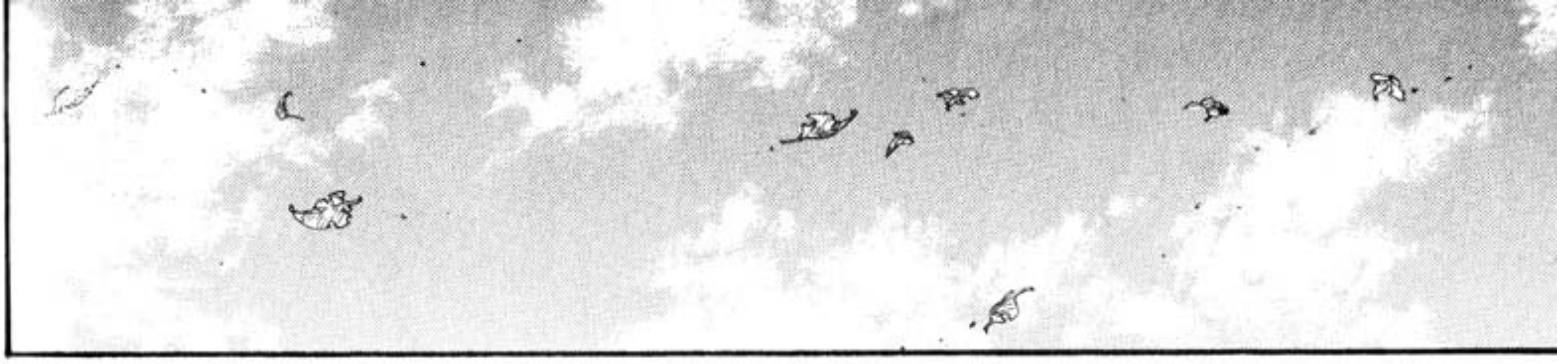
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU YASOMA.

OH, RIGHT!
THE RECOMMEND-ATION FEE- IT'S A RECENTLY DEVELOPED CUSTOM.
I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO THEM.

IS THIS ENOUGH ?
YES, THAT SHOULD DO.

I'VE ALREADY USED SO MUCH OF IT. BUT *THIS* IS IMPORTANT...

...
I MEAN, WITH A REPUTATION LIKE YOURS!!
IT'S NOT A PROBLEM.
I'M USING SOMEONE ELSE'S NAME TO LAUNCH MY CAREER...
...BUT THIS IS JUST A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.
KRICH
KRICH
OKAY, I'LL MEET YOU TOMORROW AT THE TAVERN!!
AND IN THE UNLIKELY CASE THAT SUSUKIDA REFUSES, I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT GIVING HIM THE MONEY.
AND THEN I CAN STILL GO AND SEE PLENTY OF OTHER PEOPLE, LIKE ŌNO OR GOTŌ.
I AM GOING TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF...!!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE MYSELF AS GREAT AS THE NAME I'M USING.



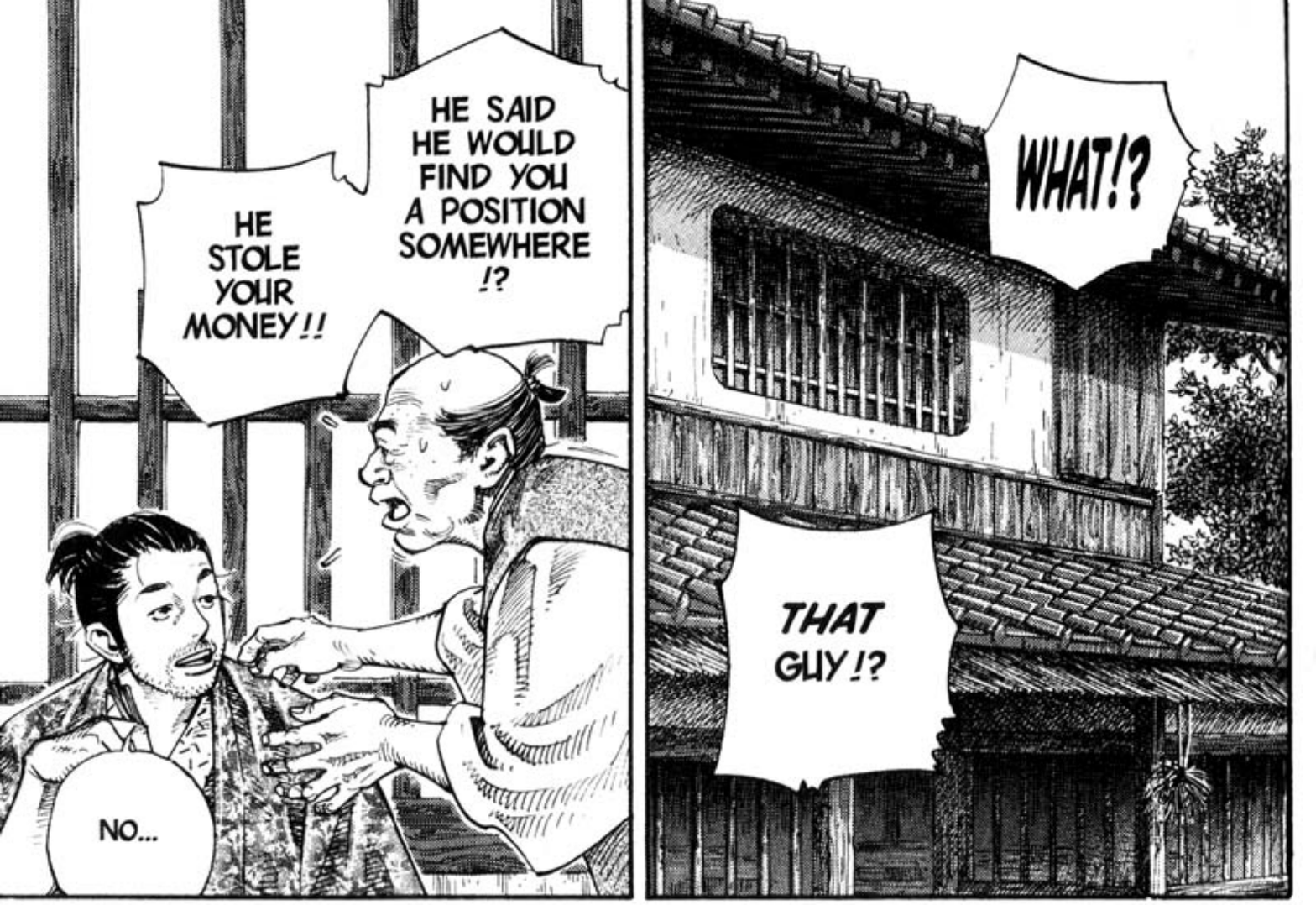
IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS...

ACTUALLY, YES.
THERE MUST BE A REASON HE HASN'T COME.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
BUT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DAYS NOW.

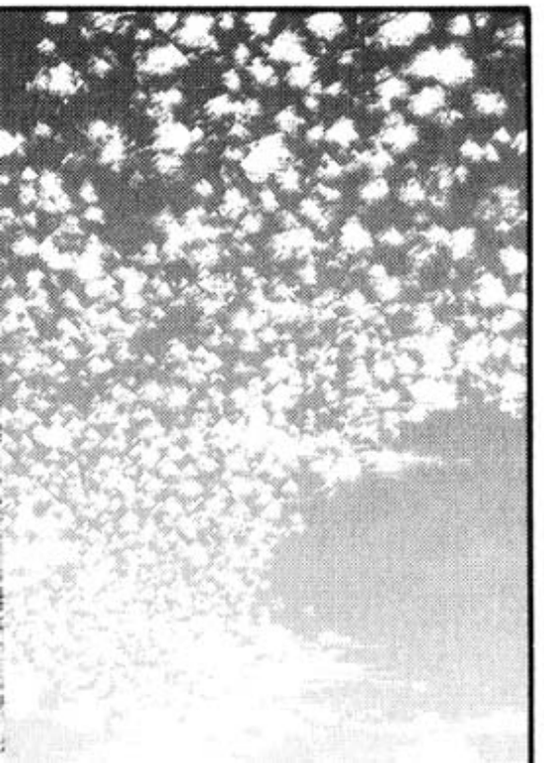
YOU'VE BEEN HERE EVERY DAY, AND YOU JUST SIT THERE...
ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMEONE ?

MAYBE NOBODY WANTED TO HIRE ME...

...


HE SAID HE WOULD FIND YOU A POSITION SOMEWHERE !?
HE STOLE YOUR MONEY!!
NO...
WHAT!?
THAT GUY!?

THAT'S THE RECOMMENDATION FEE I GAVE HIM--IT'S A RECENT CUSTOM.
HE DIDN'T TAKE MY MONEY.



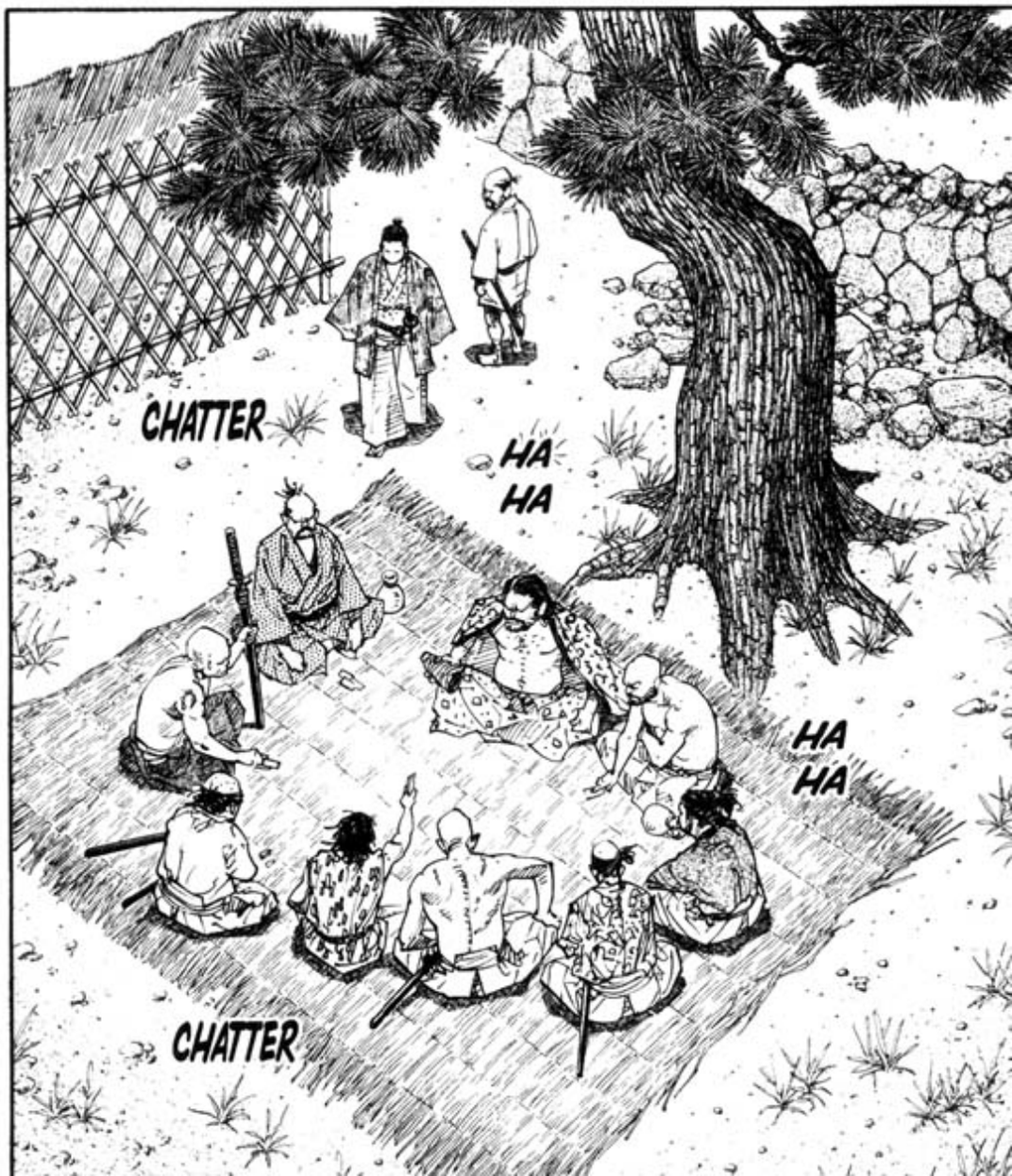
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!?

OH MY! YOU'VE BEEN HAD!

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING !?
WHAT --!?

HUH ?
YOU WANNA BE DEALT IN?

NO.


CHATTER
HA HA
HA HA
CHATTER

I SEE.
HM... AKAKABE?
HAVEN'T SEEN HIM AROUND LATELY.
I'M LOOKING FOR AKAKABE YASOMA.
I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
WHAT !?
HOLD ON...
EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T PLAY, YOU HAVE TO PAY YOUR ADMISSION FEE!!
WAIT A MINUTE.
KRICH
WHAT!?
YOU MUST BE A THIEF, AFTER OUR MONEY!
YOU'RE BROKE AND YOU INTERRUPT OUR GAMBLING...
IS THAT TRUE !?

COME ON, DRAW YOUR SWORD!!
ANYONE SCARED OFF BY YOUR PATHETIC THREATS WILL NEVER MAKE IT HERE IN OSAKA!
C'MON, YOU PATHETIC BASTARD!!

I'LL C-CUT YOU DOWN!!
I'LL--
HA HA HA! AND YOU HAVE TO ANNOUNCE IT TO EVERYONE.

HEY!
HE'S GOING TO DRAW HIS SWORD!!
GO AHEAD AN' DO IT!!

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM!?
YOU... VERMIN!!

KRICH

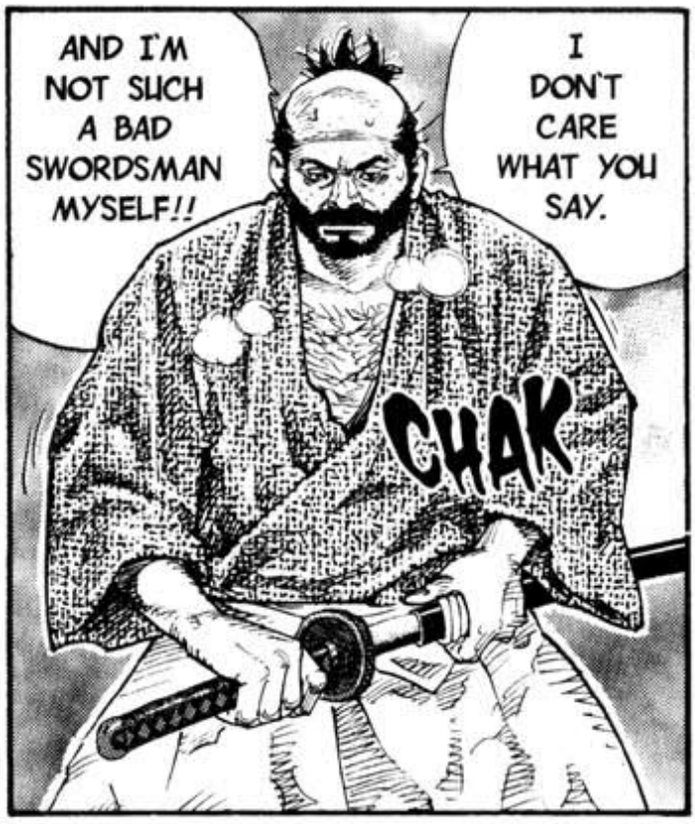
...OF THE CHŪJŌ STYLE!!
I'M SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

SLISH
...!!
GASP!
ARRGH!
HE CUT ME!!
HEY!
YASOMA!

FWISH
FWISH
WAIT!
YOU BASTARD...!!
YOU TRICKED ME!!
WAIT!
KRICH
GIVE IT BACK!!
I WANT MY MONEY BACK!!
HOW DARE YOU TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL...!?
HOW DARE YOU TRICK ME!?

HAH...
HUF
HUF
HUF
ALL RIGHT THEN...
I'M GETTING TIRED OF RUNNING.

!!


AND I'M NOT SUCH A BAD SWORDSMAN MYSELF!!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY.
CHAK

GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY!!
HMPH!
YOU WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO GIVE IT TO ME.
WHAT !?

SMIRK
BESIDES...

FSH

IF I DEFEAT THE *MIGHTY* SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
I'LL MAKE QUITE A NAME FOR MYSELF...

NOBODY WOULD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.
YES, THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO!!
NO, WAIT... IF I KILL YOU...
I CAN JUST CALL MYSELF SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!

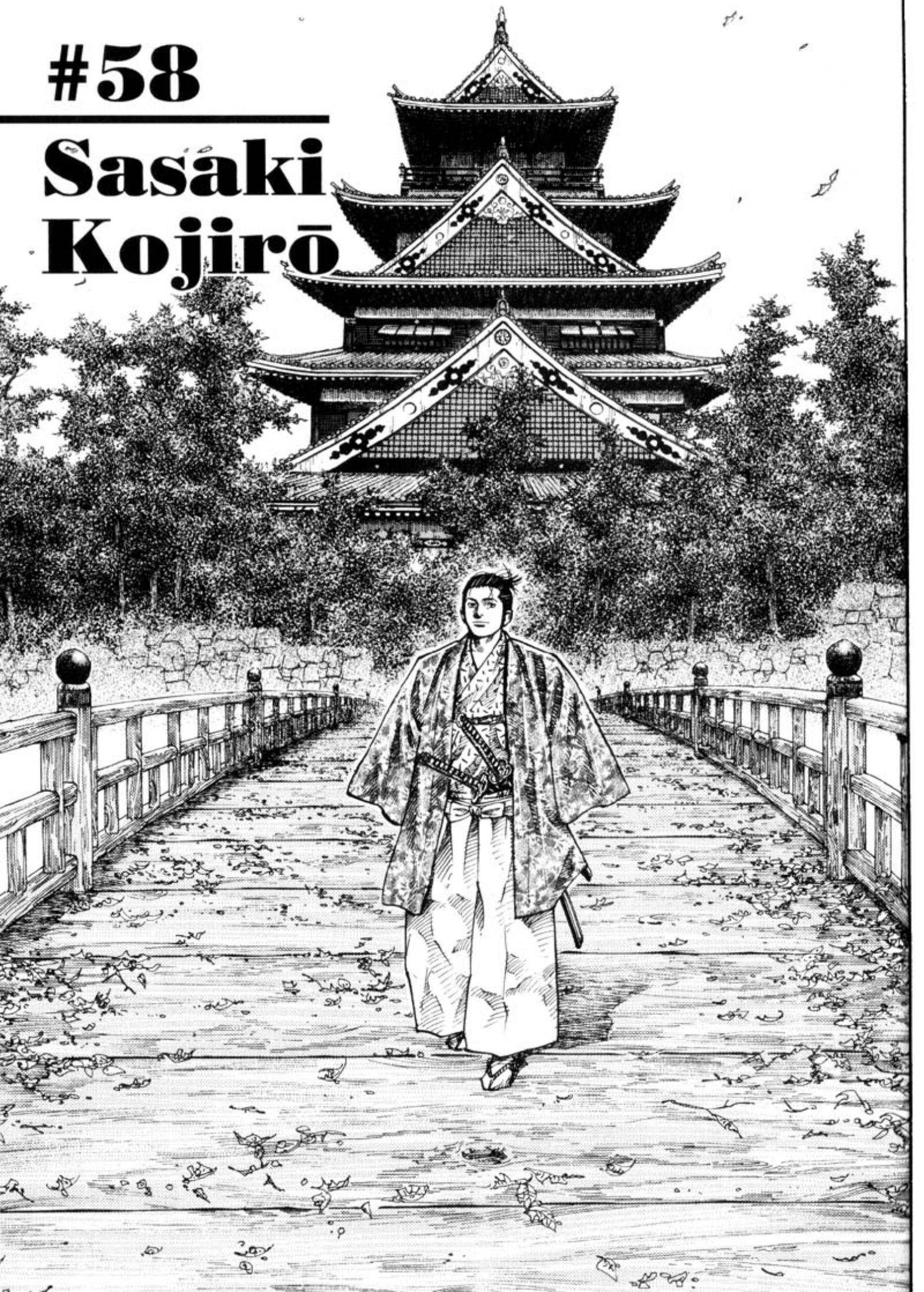
FIRST YOU CHEAT ME, AND NOW YOU SAY YOU'LL KILL ME!?
Y-YOU BASTARD!!
SMIRK

...
FROM HERE ON...
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!! YOU BASTARD!!
AND YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE MY NAME!?
DAMN YOU!!
...
KOJIRŌ...
...OUR SWORDS WILL DO THE TALKING.
KRICH
KOJIRŌ!
...!!

ARE YOU
REALLY
SASAKI
KOJIRŌ?
SHAKE
!!!
BRR
BRR
BRR
SHAKE
BRR

#58

Sasaki Kojirō



WAH HA HA!!
HA HA HA! YOU'RE TREMBLING WITH FEAR!!

MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY BEATEN ME TO STEALING KOJIRŌ'S NAME!!
HMPH!

HA HA HA
YOU'RE JUST A MASTER OF BOASTING ABOUT YOURSELF!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

!?

AFTER KILLING THE *REAL* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
...YOU'RE USING HIS NAME AND PASSING YOURSELF OFF AS HIM.
NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW THE DIFERENCE...
H-HOW DARE YOU!?
ARE YOU CALLING ME AN IMPOSTOR!?
SMIRK
HUF.
HUF.
...
HUF.
YAHH!!
FWOOSH
AHHH!!
FWUMP

AFTER I KILL YOU, THAT IS.
...
I'LL BE THE *THIRD* SASAKI KOJIRŌ...
ALL RIGHT THEN...

UNH!!
KRICH
IT'S *MY* TURN TO USE THE NAME!!

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

I CAN'T DIE.
I HAVEN'T MADE ANYTHING OUT OF MY LIFE YET!!
I CAN'T LET THIS BASTARD KILL ME!!
I CAN'T...
THWAK

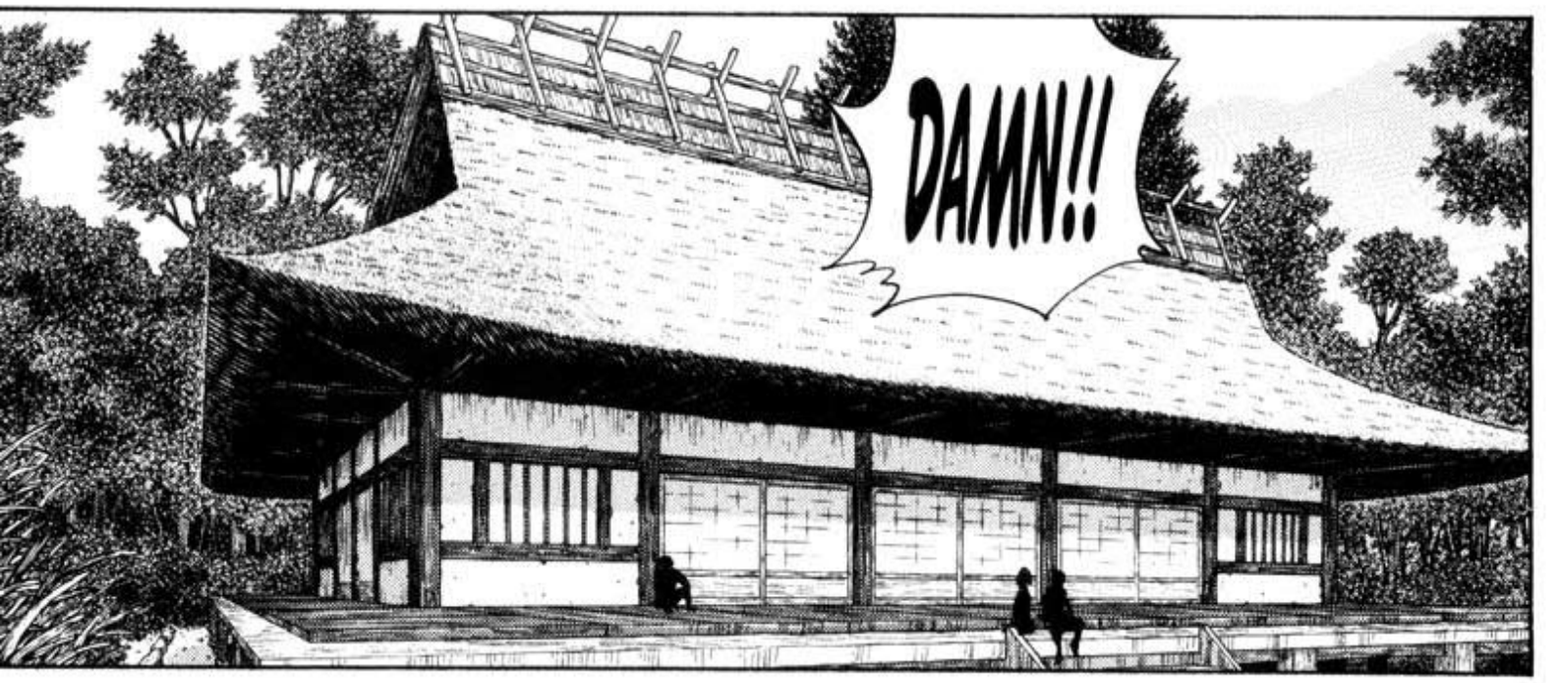
!
DAMN PIECE OF JUNK SWORD!!
!!

!!
YAHH!!
THUD
NGHH!
FWUSH

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
AT LEAST YOU HAVE SOME STRENGTH...
KRICH
HEH HEH...
BUT NOW, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A SWORD.
WHUD
I CAN'T LOSE TO THIS BASTARD.
I JUST CAN'T...!!
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HA HA!
HA HA HA!!

THWAK
THOK
THWAK
I'M FINALLY GOING TO BEAT YOU!!
FWOOSH
HUF.
HA HA!
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
WHUD

THWUD
NNGH!
THWAK
!!


DAMN!!

GASP!
...!!

I USED THAT TREE ON PURPOSE.
COULDN'T YOU EVEN FIGURE THAT OUT?

IF THAT TREE WASN'T THERE, I WOULD HAVE WON.
YOU IDIOT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL BAD, MATAHACHI.
YOU'RE STRONG, TOO.

TAKEZŌ...
...THAT WASN'T NICE!
HUH?

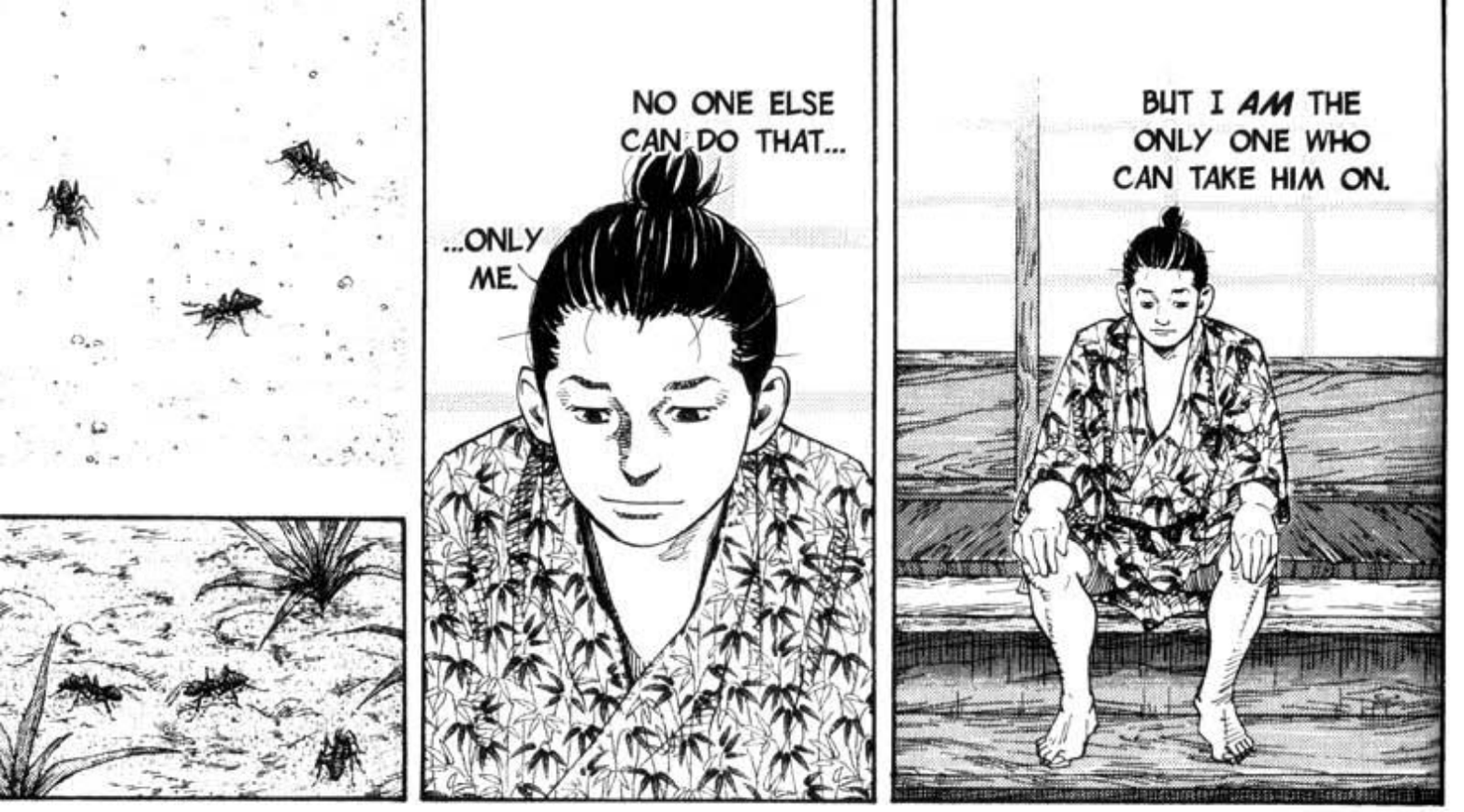
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THIS VILLAGE WHO CAN TAKE ON TAKEZŌ...
AND THAT'S *INCLUDING* THE ADULTS!

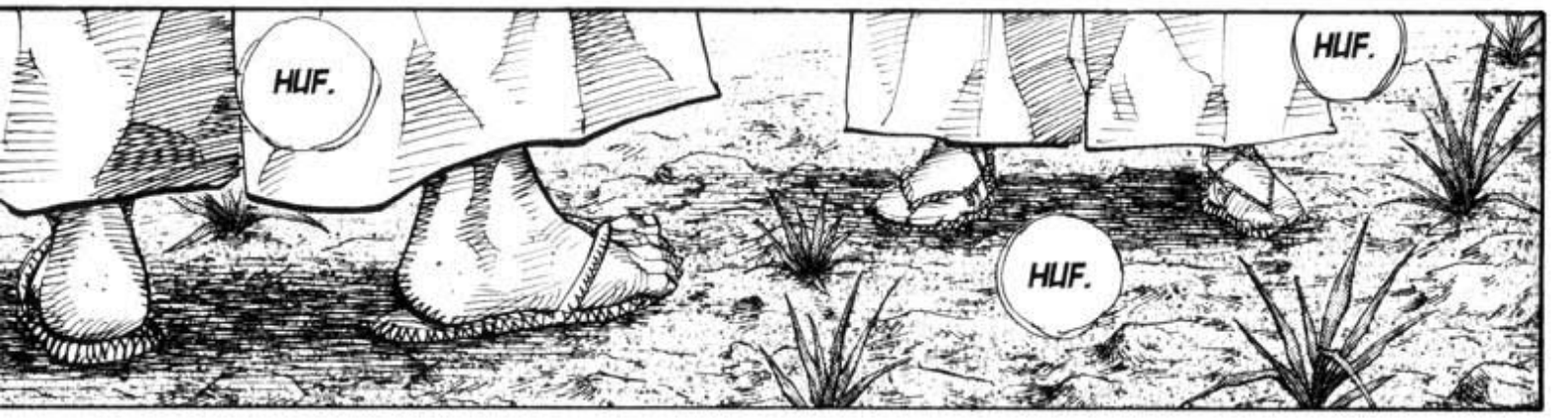
SOMETHING I KNOW I DON'T HAVE...

ONCE HE GETS HIS HAND ON A SWORD, HE BECOMES DIFFERENT. HE HAS SOMETHING UNIQUE.

OTSŪ...

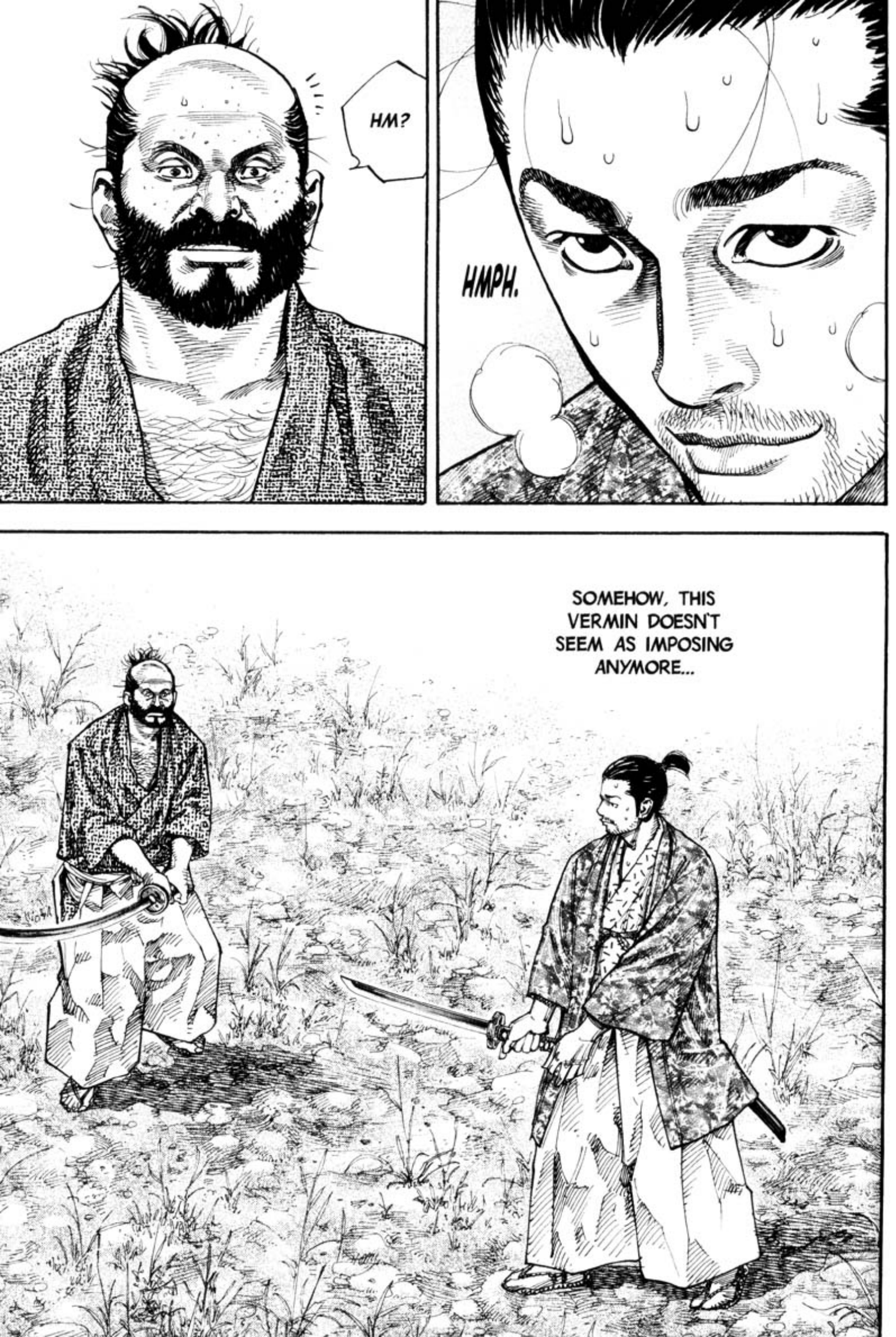
I'M NOT AB-NORMAL.
HMPH.
UH-HUH.
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M *NOT* WEAK, AM I!?
HE'S JUST ABNORMAL.


NO ONE ELSE CAN DO THAT...
...ONLY ME.
BUT I *AM* THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TAKE HIM ON.


HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.

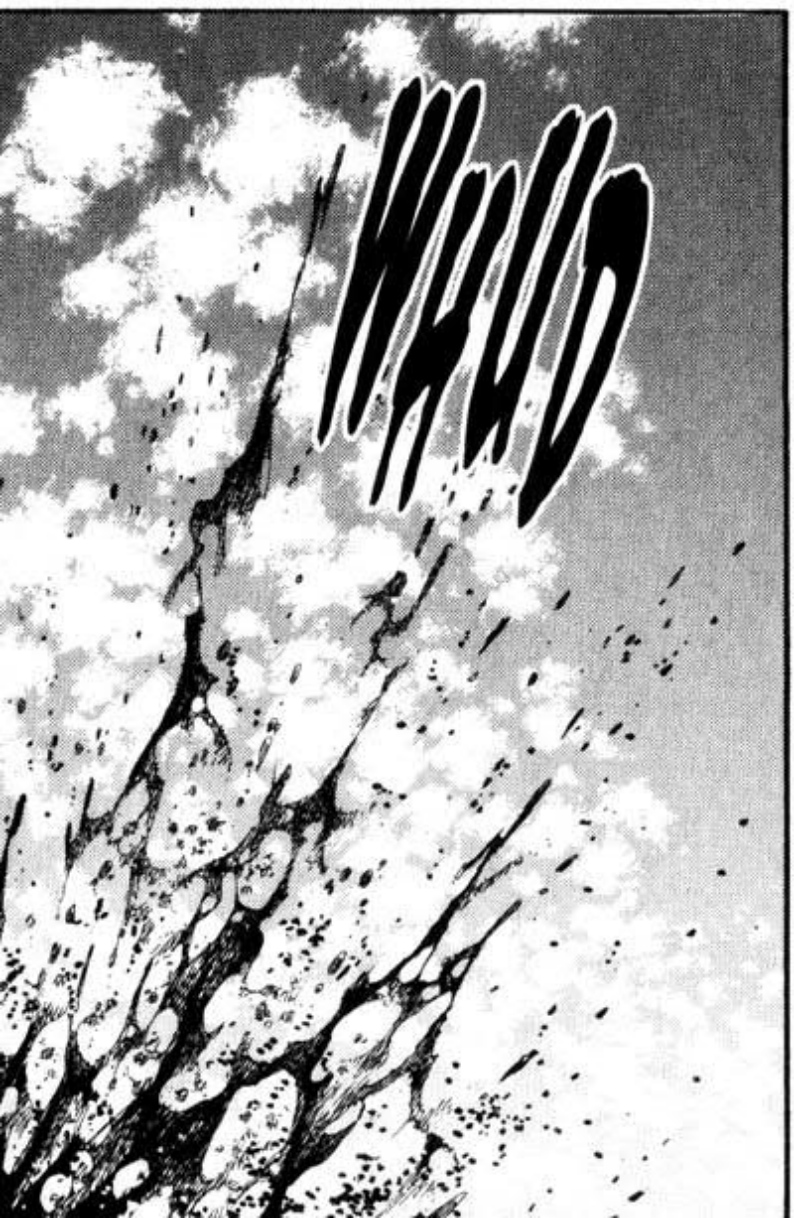
TAKEZŌ...


HM?
HMPH.
SOMEHOW, THIS VERMIN DOESN'T SEEM AS IMPOSING ANYMORE...

SHUNK

SLISSH

I AM
SASAKI
KOJIRŌ!!


WHUD

HE'S BACK.
HMM...
HEY!

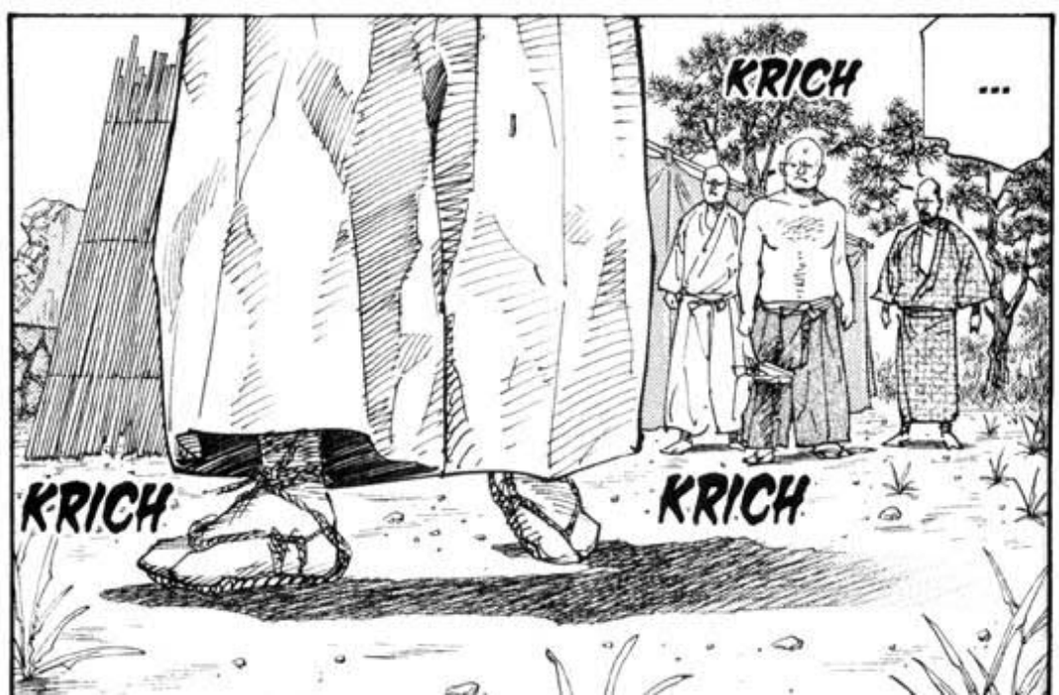
FSH

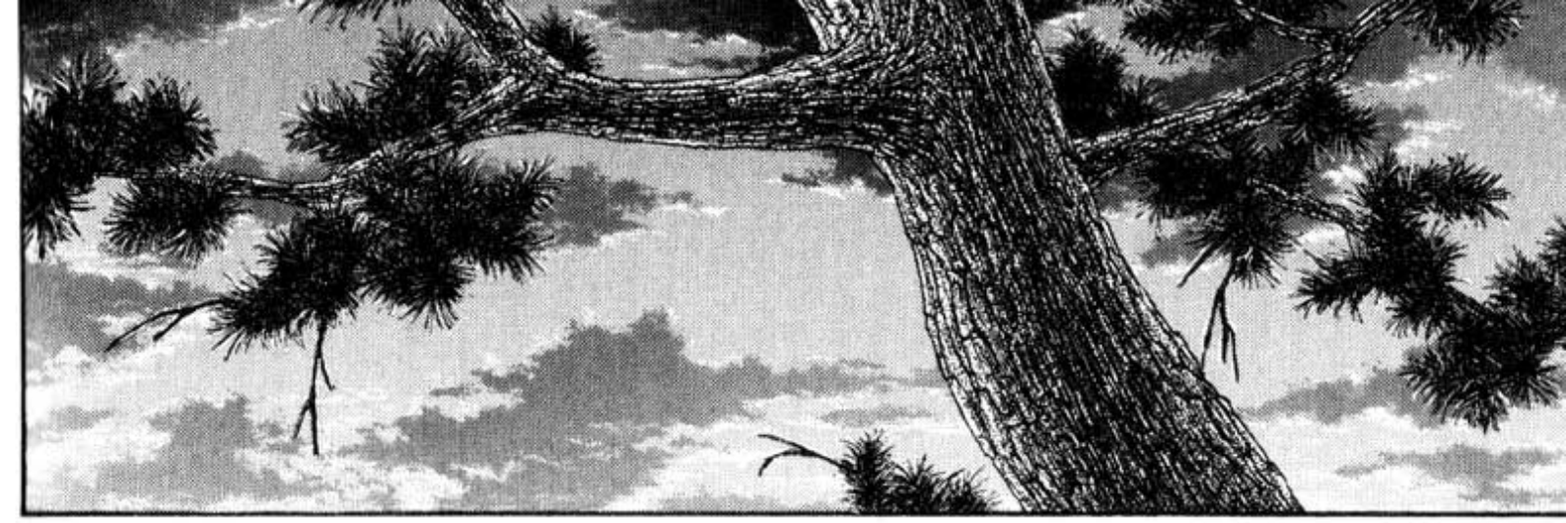
HE'S ALONE...
KRICH
KRICH
WHERE'S AKAKABE!?

THAT'S...
THAT'S AKAKABE'S SWORD...!!

ANYONE ELSE WANT TO BE CUT DOWN...
...BY SASAKI KOJIRŌ?

GASP...!!
NO...


KRICH
...
KRICH
KRICH



EXCUSE ME...

SIR!!

HUH?

DO YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY TONIGHT?

YOU CAN STAY AT OUR PLACE...

WHAT ?

WELL...

AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS AREA IS OVERRUN WITH RUFFIANS AND THUGS.

THEY LIVE ON WHAT LITTLE SAKE, MONEY, AND FOOD THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON...

...AND THEY'RE ALSO AFTER THE WOMEN HERE.

WE JUST CAN'T SLEEP SAFE AT NIGHT.

BUT IF WE HAVE A SAMURAI LIKE YOU STAYING AT OUR PLACE, THEN THEY WON'T COME NEAR US.

OF COURSE, WE WON'T CHARGE YOU.

WOULD YOU DO US THE HONOR...?

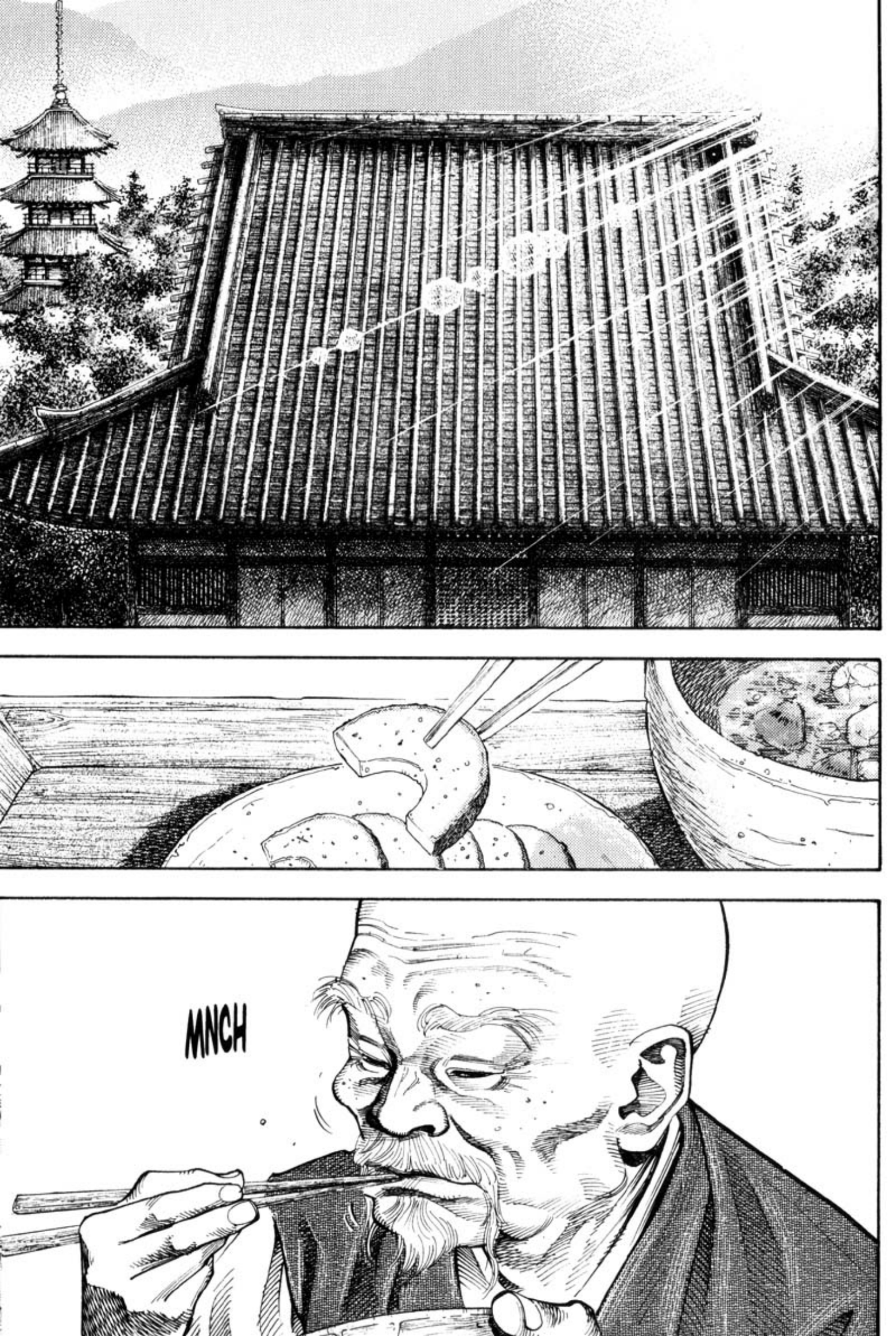
...!!
SURE, IF YOU THINK I CAN BE OF ANY HELP...
...

AHH...
OH, KOJIRŌ...

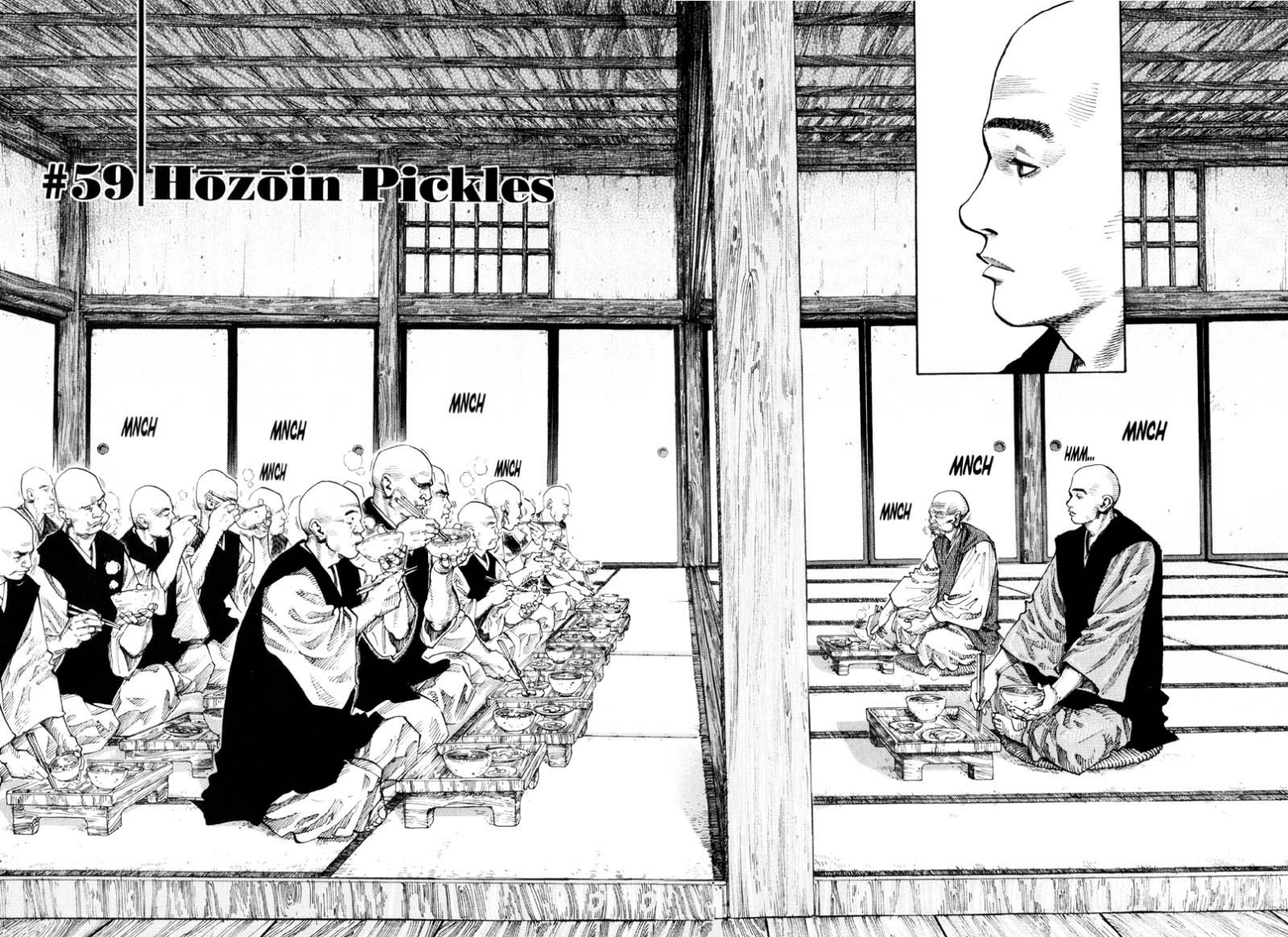
Vagabond

アリ食ったことある？
俺はある…。

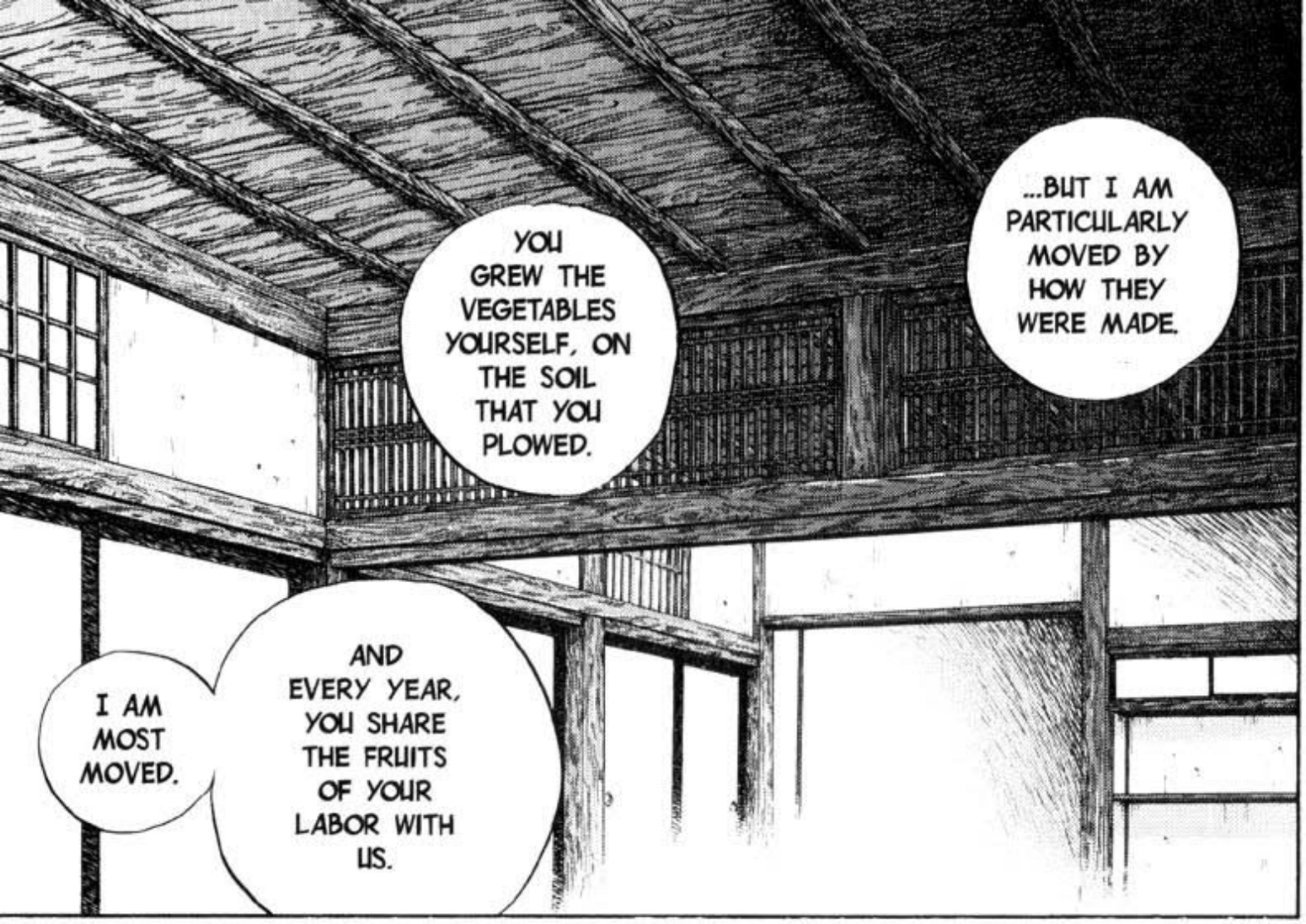
(HAVE YOU EVER EATEN ANTS? I HAVE...)


MNCH

#59 Hōzōin Pickles



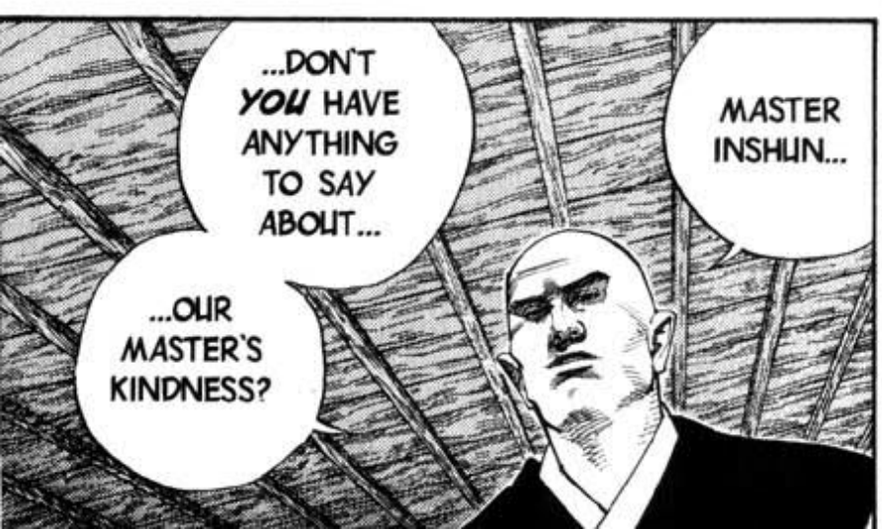
...BUT THIS YEAR'S PICKLES ARE ASTOUNDING, MASTER IN'EI.
MNCH
MNCH
DELICIOUS!!
MNCH
MNCH
I LOOK FORWARD TO THE HOZOIN PICKLES EVERY YEAR...
MNCH
MNCH
HMM...
OF COURSE, THEY *TASTE* WONDERFUL...
THERE HE GOES, THE SYCOPHANT.
HMPH...
MNCH
MNCH
WE PICKLE THEM THE WAY YOU TAUGHT US...
...BUT THEY NEVER TURN OUT LIKE YOURS!!
ONLY YOU CAN MAKE PICKLES LIKE THIS!


I AM MOST MOVED.
AND EVERY YEAR, YOU SHARE THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABOR WITH US.
YOU GREW THE VEGETABLES YOURSELF, ON THE SOIL THAT YOU PLOWED.
...BUT I AM PARTICULARLY MOVED BY HOW THEY WERE MADE.

YOUR BLATANT FLATTERY IS SO TRANSPARENT...
MNCH
MNCH

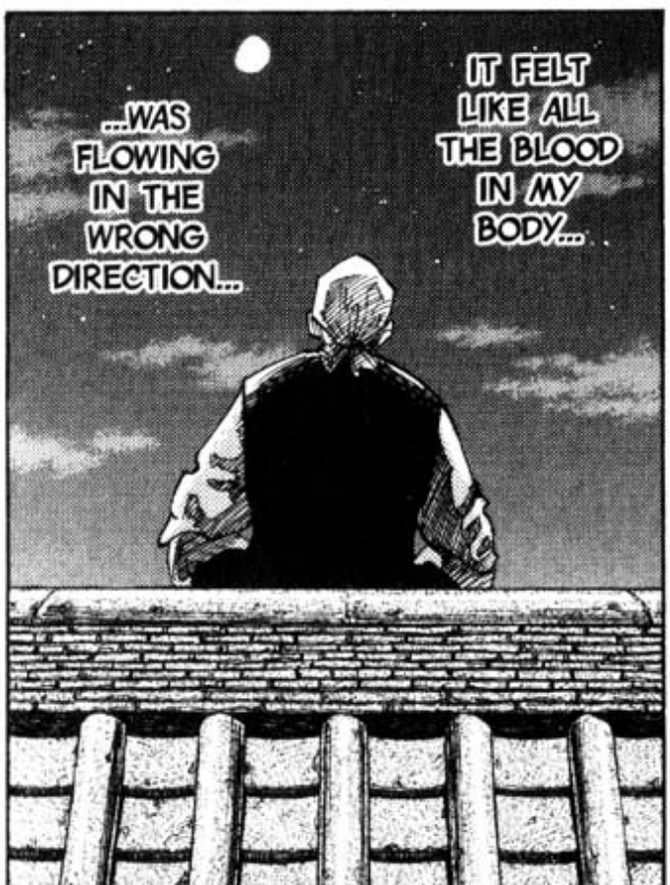
YES.
SNIF
SNIF

I, YOUR MOST FAITHFUL DISCIPLE, MYOEI, AND EVERYONE ELSE HERE, ALL FEEL THE SAME WAY.
SNIFFLE
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

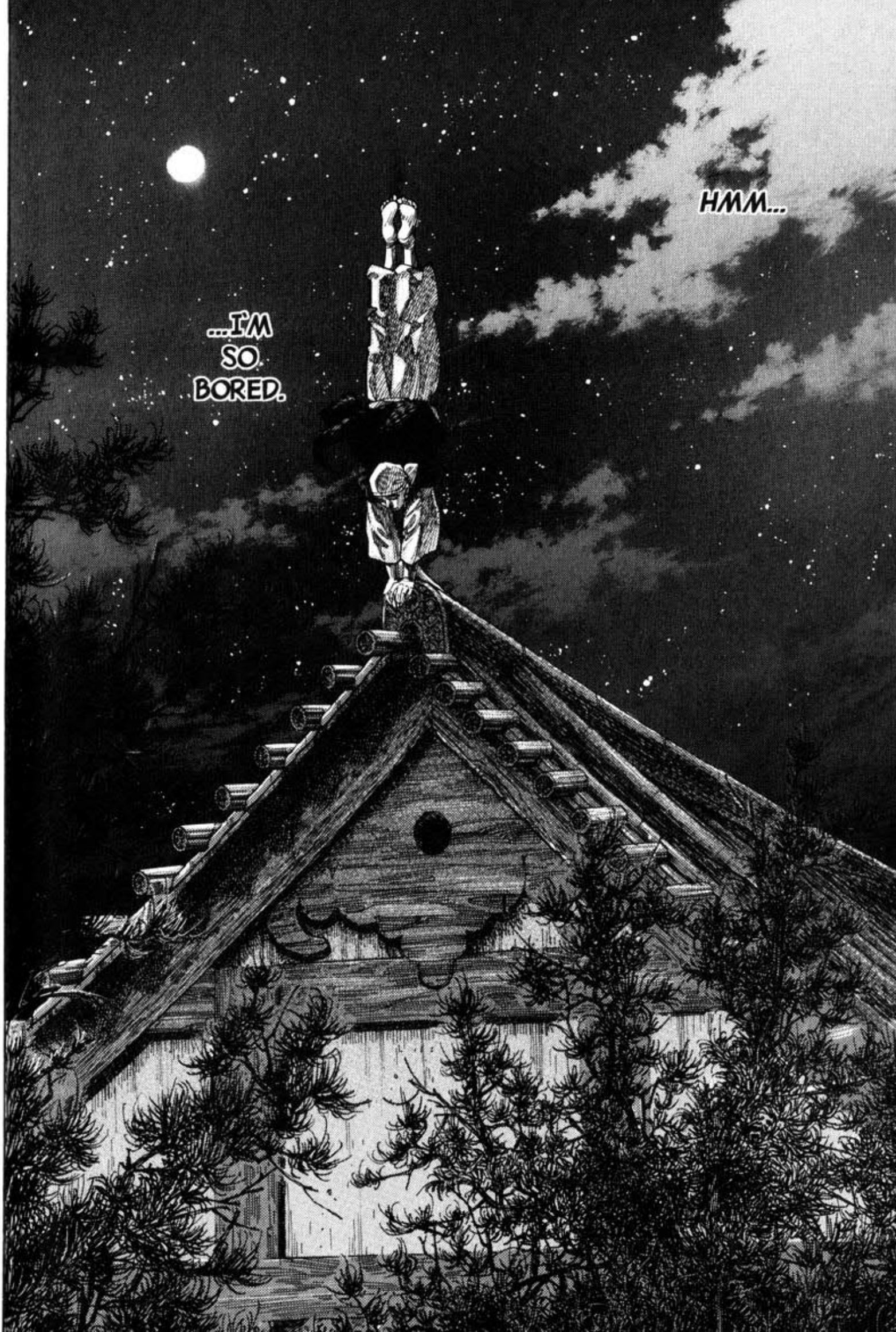

MASTER INSHUN...
...DON'T *YOU* HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT...
...OUR MASTER'S KINDNESS?

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?
MASTER INSHUN ...
YOU'VE BEEN IN A DAZE EVER SINCE YOUR FIGHT WITH THAT MIYAMOTO FELLOW.
HMPH!
...TOO SALTY.
MNCH
!!
MNCH
...PERHAPS YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN...
IF THAT WAS ENOUGH TO WEAR YOU OUT...
MYŌEI...
...YOU'RE OVER-STEPPING YOUR PLACE.
THEY FEEL THEY'VE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY SOMEONE YOUNGER THAN THEY ARE.
THESE MEN CAN'T ACCEPT THAT INSHUN'S THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER.

DID IT REALLY WEAR YOU OUT THIS MUCH?
HMM...
MNCH MNCH
IT WAS A HARD AND BITTER BATTLE...
...BUT YOU WON.
THAT FIGHT WITH MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
...


...WAS FLOWING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION...
IT FELT LIKE ALL THE BLOOD IN MY BODY...

FWOOSH
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE.
YAHH!!
FWAK
!!


HMM...
...I'M SO BORED.

INSHUN IS FINISHED.

THAT'S HOW INSHUN IS NOW.
HE'LL NEVER REGAIN HIS SPIRIT.

I'VE SEEN MANY FIGHTERS LOSE THEIR SPIRIT...
...AFTER A CRITICAL FIGHT OR BATTLE...
THEYRE JUST COMPLETELY SPENT.

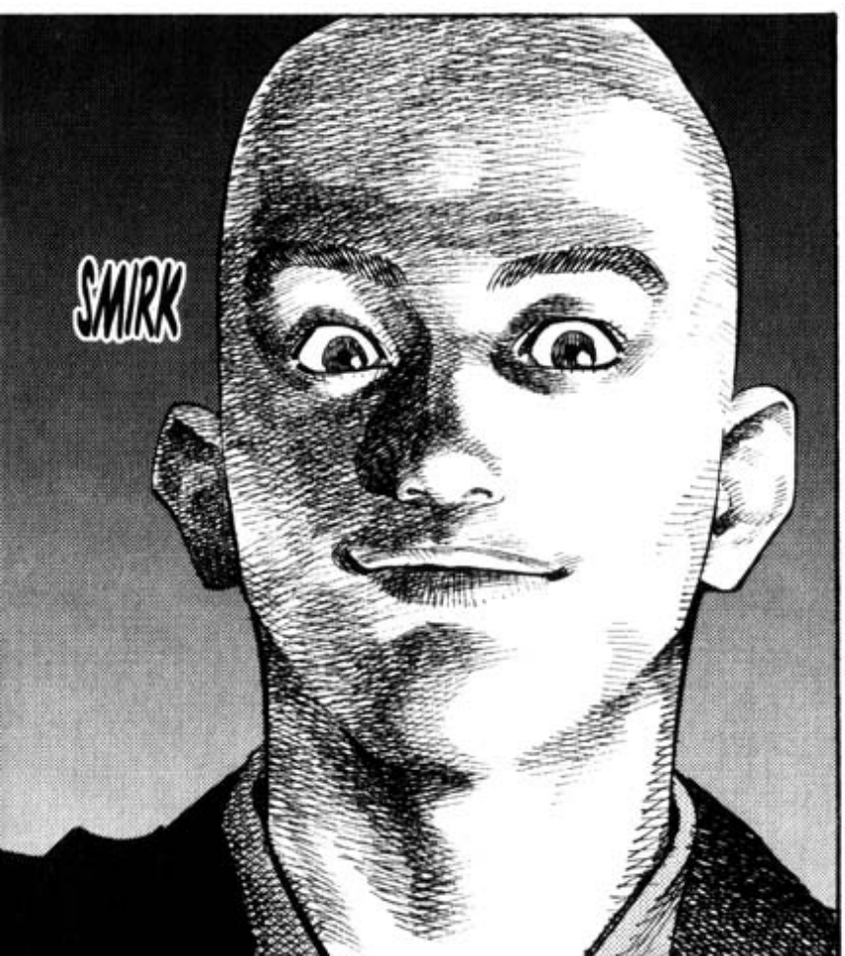
THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE FIRST PLACE...

SO INSHUN'S DONE.
HA HA HA!
I THOUGHT HE MIGHT AT LEAST ACT MORE ALERT IN FRONT OF MASTER IN'EI...

MYŌEI, YOU'LL BE THE NEXT MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!
HMM...

I THOUGHT HE RAN BACK TO HIS HOME VILLAGE...
BUT DID YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO MIYAMTO MUSASHI?
HUH?
SUPPOSEDLY, HE'S IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KASUGA.
WHAT!? THAT'S RIGHT HERE.
WHAT!?
AND HE'S RIGOROUSLY TRAINING TO DEFEAT INSHUN.
AND...
...MASTER IN'EI IS THE ONE WHO'S TRAINING HIM.

IS THAT TRUE?


SMIRK

!!

FWIP
!!

THUNK
!!
NNGH!
URGH!
FWAP
HEY!
WHAT'RE YOU--!?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND!?

HMM...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MASTER'S UP TO...
YOU--
BASTARD!!
FWOOSH
HUYAAH!!
THUNK
NNGH!
...BUT MUSASHI STILL WANTS TO FIGHT ME!?

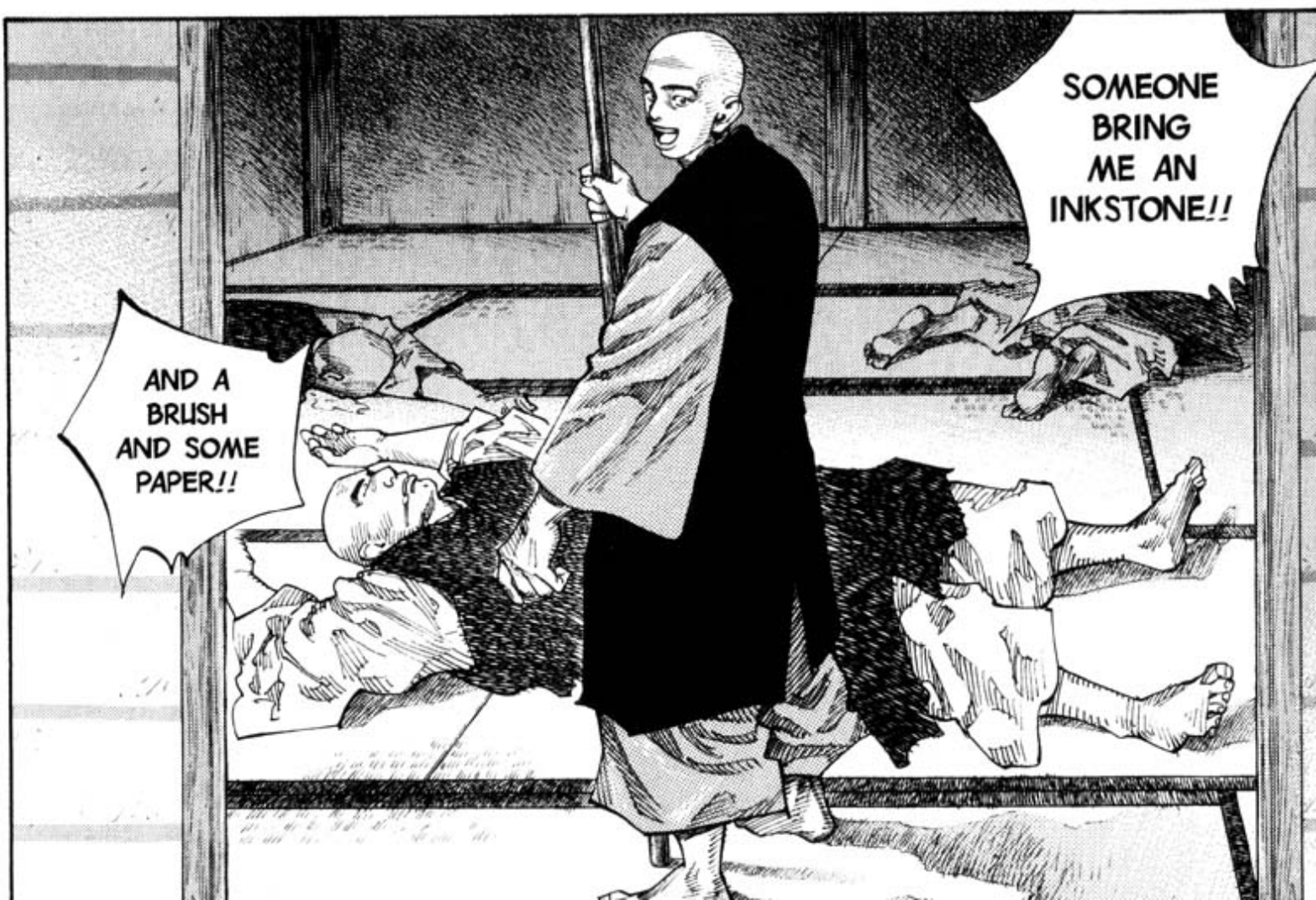
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!!
THUNK

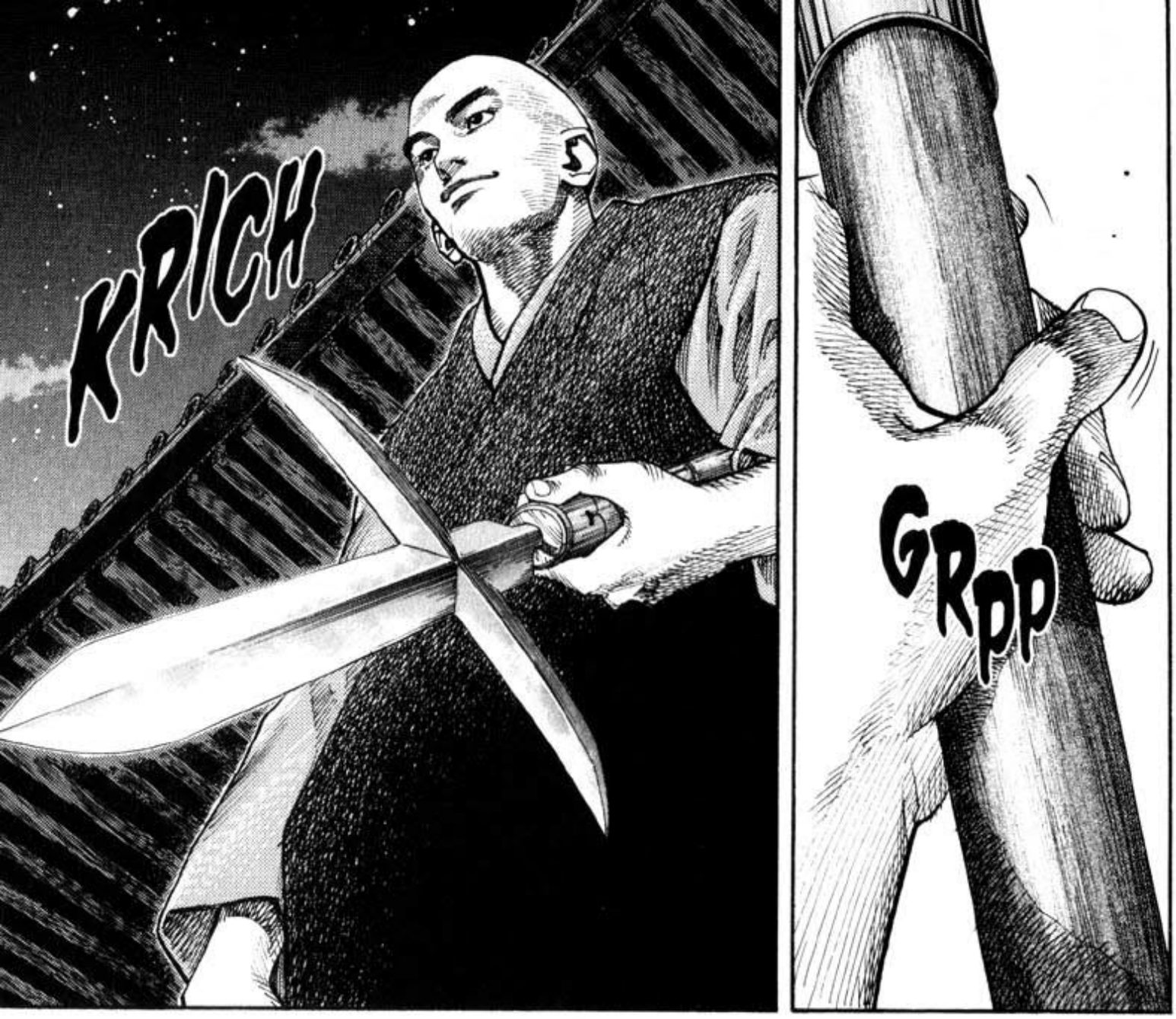
THUD
ARGH!

!!

YOU LITTLE BASTARD!!
FWOOSH
YAHH!!
KLAK
...
YOU'RE TOO SLOW.

YAHH!!
THWAK


SOMEONE BRING ME AN INKSTONE!!
AND A BRUSH AND SOME PAPER!!


KRICH
GRPP

A MESSAGE FROM INSHUN.

...
MUSASHI...

HE'S
COMING...

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on *VAGABOND*, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue's *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, *VAGABOND* has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY*, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Perhaps inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003, NHK produced the historical period drama, *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu, one of the largest schools of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

koku
Approximately 5.1 U.S. bushels or 180.39 liters. Samurai were paid their stipends in bushels of rice. One *koku* was a standard measure representing the approximate amount rice necessary to feed one man for one year.

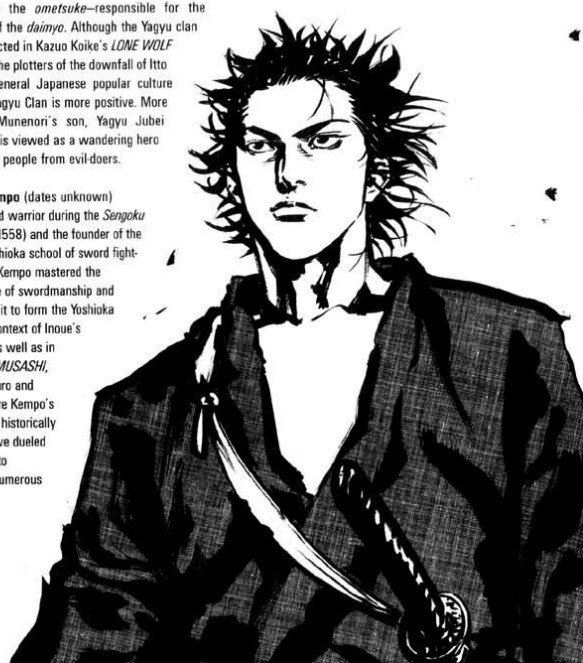
Sasaki Kojiro
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow cut" technique, inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo*, and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading Rinzai sect temple, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.



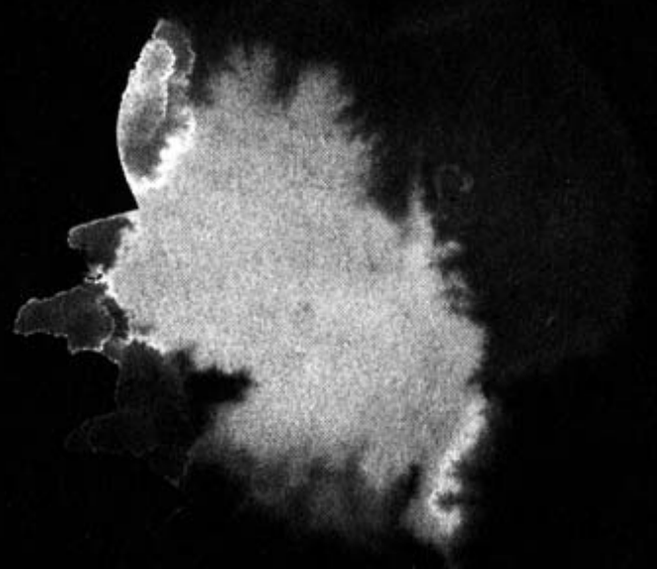
This is the LAST page of this comic!

VAGABOND has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format–presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, *VAGABOND* is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy *VAGABOND*, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order–surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.



editor's choice

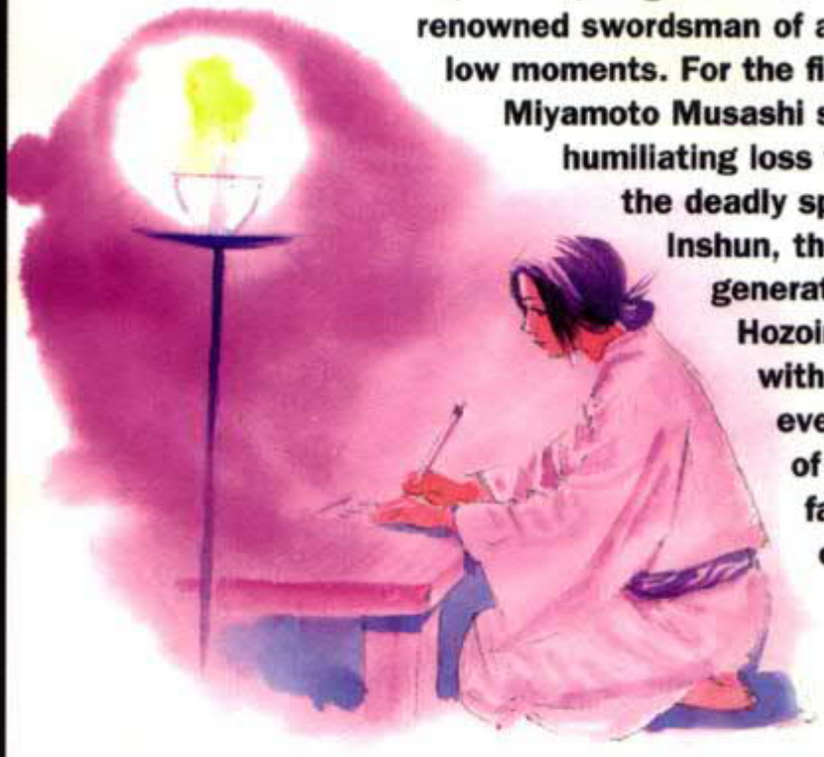
VIZ Graphic Novel

$9.95 USA/$16.50 CAN

Vagabond

"I think this manga has something for everyone. A MUST READ!"

—Phoenix, *MangaManiacs.org*



Fear, failure, disgrace... Even the most renowned swordsman of all time had his low moments. For the first time ever, Miyamoto Musashi suffers a humiliating loss when he takes on the deadly spear technique of Inshun, the second-generation master of Hozoin Temple. Dealing with defeat can be even more daunting of a task than facing the fiercest of warriors. Will Musashi be up for his latest challenge?

This book reads from right to left.

VIZ

www.viz.com

RATED M FOR MATURE

ISBN 1-56931-894-8

50995

9 781569 318942

00995

7 82009 13783 2

VIZ

Fp: Facebook.com/meganebuk